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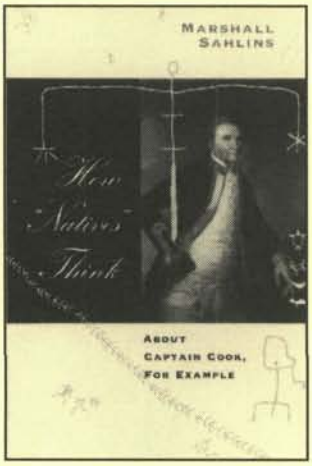

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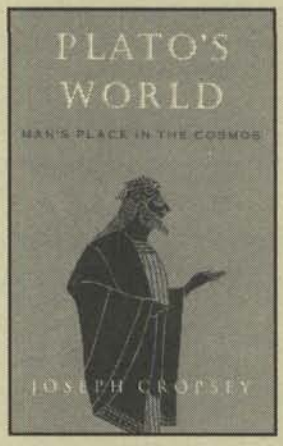

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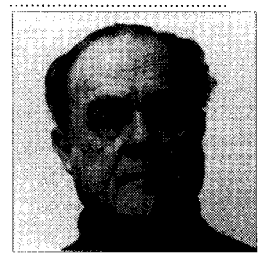

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Causality, Entropy, Becoming

RÉMY LESTIENNE

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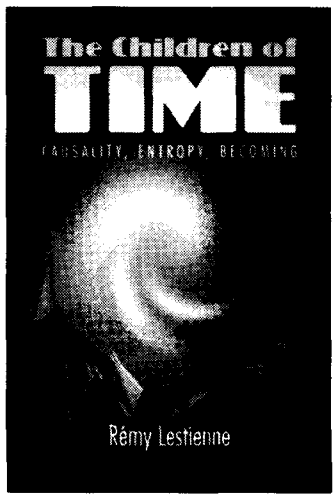

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The Art of the Nap

ARISTIDES

Intellectual serenity in the United States, I have heard it said, consists in not giving a damn about Harvard. Having been in Cambridge recently, I sensed—no, actually, I knew—I had achieved it. Bopping about Harvard Square, peeping into the Yard, popping into a building or two, I felt not the least yearning. I did not wish to be the Seymour Boylston Professor at Harvard or even to give the Charles Eliot Skolnik Lectures—not now, not ever. I have no children whom I wished to be admitted to Harvard. Yes, Harvard could continue to get along nicely without me, as it seems to have done over the past three-hundred-fifty-odd years, and I, in the time remaining to me, can get along nicely without it.

With such serene thoughts, I set myself on my back on my comfortable bed at The Inn at Harvard, the hotel where I was staying. I had on gray wool trousers, a blue shirt, and a four-in-hand knit tie, which I didn't bother to unloosen. My hands were folded together on my chest in the corpse-in-the-casket position, and I hadn't bothered to turn back the bedspread. It was three-thirty on a cold and gray February afternoon. My next appointment was at five o'clock. There was nothing, at that moment, that I was eager to read. Into the arms of Morpheus I slipped, and for the next half hour I slept, I won't say like a baby, or like a log, or like a turtle, but like what I now prefer to think myself—a man who has mastered, in all its delicate intricacy, the art of the nap.

I did not move, I did not stir. I woke, as planned, without a wrinkle in my shirt, trousers, or cheek, not a hair out of place. A most impressive, if I do say so myself—and at that moment I did say so to myself—performance. Really quite brilliant. The term *control freak* is almost never used approvingly, I know, but I felt myself at that moment a control freak entirely happy in his work—that is to say, in perfect control. I carefully slipped off the bed, and walked into the bathroom, where I gazed at my clear eyes in the large mirror. Another fine nap successfully brought off. I was rested, perhaps a touch less than radiant, and ready to continue not giving a damn about Harvard.

I don't ordinarily nap on a bed or on my back. As a nap-master, I fear too much comfort and the consequent difficulty of pulling myself out of the pleasures of too-deep sleep to go back into the world. I also wish to avoid rumpledness, the toll that a nap on one's back on a couch often takes. Most of my napping therefore is done sitting up, on a couch, shoes off, with my feet resting on a low footstool. Having one's feet up is important.

Most of my naps—and I usually get on the average of three or four a week—take place late in the afternoon, around five or five-thirty, with the television news playing softly in the background. As the reports of earthquakes, plagues, arson, pillaging, and general corruption hums on, I snooze away, a perfect symbol of the indifference of man in the modern age. These naps last from twenty to thirty-five minutes. ("A nap after dinner was silver," says old Prince Bolkonsky in *War and Peace,* "a nap before dinner golden.") Should the telephone ring while I am in mid-nap, I answer it in an especially clear and wide-awake voice that I don't usually bother evoking when I am in fact wide awake. Some of these naps leave me a touch groggy, though this soon enough disappears. Usually, they all do the job, which is to help get me through the evening.

Taste in naps differs. I not long ago asked a friend, an Englishman, if he naps. "Whenever possible," he replied. Prone or sitting up?

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"Prone." On a bed or couch? "Bed." Trousers on or off? "Generally off." And for how long? "That depends," he said, "on when the cats choose to depart." Joseph Conrad wrote that his task was "by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*." The picture of my friend with his cats napping atop him is almost too easily seen.

I nap well on airplanes, trains, buses, and cars and with a special proficiency at concerts and lectures. I am, when pressed, able to nap standing up. In certain select company, I wish I could nap while being spoken to. I have not yet learned to nap while I myself am speaking, though I have felt the urge to do so. I had a friend named Walter B. Scott who, in his late sixties, used to nap at parties of ten or twelve people that he and his wife gave. One would look over and there Walter would be, chin on his chest, lights out, nicely zonked; he might as well have hung a Gone Fishing sign on his chest. Then, half an hour or so later, without remarking upon his recent departure, he would smoothly pick up the current of the talk, not missing a stroke, and get finely back into the flow. I saw him do this perhaps four or five times, always with immense admiration.

Certain jobs seem to carry (unspoken) napping privileges. Writing in 1931, H. L. Mencken noted that one of the tests of a good cop was the talent of "stealing three naps a night in a garage without getting caught by the roundsman." Surely, movie projectionists get to nap to their hearts' content. Cab and limousine drivers must nap. Napping on the job can scarcely be unknown to psychoanalysts and other workers in the head trades. ("Uh huh," mumbles the dozing psychiatrist in the caption of a cartoon that shows the feet of his patient who has just jumped out the window.) The only job in which I ardently longed to nap was guard duty in army motor pools on cold nights in Missouri, Texas, and Arkansas. Ah, to have slipped into the back of a deuce-and-a-half (as the big trucks in the army were called) and ZZZ'd-out for a quick half hour! But fear, that first goad to conscience, won out and, difficult though it was, I stayed awake.

At a job I held one summer in college at a phonograph needle factory, one of the maintenance men, a dwarfish man of Italian ancestry, regularly slipped up to the fourth floor for a forty-minute shot of sleep. I have seen lots of people nod off at corporate meetings and at conferences. One steamy summer day in Washington, at a meeting of the National Council of the National Endowment for the Arts held at the Old Post Office Building on Pennsylvania Avenue, I noted an entire half table of Council members, heads nodding, necks jerking, eyelids drooping, effectively sedated by a slide show on city planning. I envied them, and doubtless should have joined them but for the fact that I had myself only recently awoken from a delightfully soporific lecture on the meaning of the avant-garde.

I have always slept reasonably well during lectures and never better than when a lecturer is foolhardy enough to darken the room for slides. Lecture and classroom naps tend to be of the variety I call whiplash naps—the ones where your head seems always to be snapping to. At the University of Chicago, I slept through the better part of the Italian Renaissance, or at any rate through a course in the history of its art. As a teacher myself, I am now being justly repaid by having students fall asleep in my own classes. I don't say that they drift off in droves, but I have—how to put it?—relaxed a respectable number of students in my time. At first, I found myself resenting a student falling asleep in one of my classes. But I long ago ceased taking it personally. I have come to look upon it avuncularly: poor dears, they may have been up all the previous night doing I prefer not to think what. My view of students sleeping in my classes is that, what the hell, if they cannot arise from my teaching inspired, let them at least awake refreshed.

My own youthful naps were owing, as I hope are those of my students, to happy excess. My current napping, I regret to report, is all too much part of the machinery beginning to break down. Not that I long for a nap each afternoon; if I am out in the world, I do not think about napping. My condition certainly does not yet begin to approximate the eponymous hero of Goncharov's novel *Oblomov:* "Lying down was not for Oblomov a necessity, as it is for a sick man or for a man who is sleepy; or a matter of chance, as it is for a man who is tired; or a pleasure, as it is for a lazy man; it was his normal condition." Still, if an opportunity for a nap presents itself, I find I take it.

I live in an early morning household. I generally rise by 4:45 A.M. I like the early morning;

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it is, for me, the best part of the day. I used to joke that one met a better class of person (namely, oneself) at that hour, but, in fact, what I enjoy about it is the stillness, the absence of interruption it provides, the gradual awakening of life around me. I make coffee, I begin reading; sometimes, if what I am reading is not all-demanding, I turn on a classical music station. And life seems under control, flush with possibility, hope-filled.

I have become, no doubt about it, a morning person. I was not always thus. As a young man, I used to come in around the time I now wake up. Weekends I slept till two or three in the afternoon, resting up to return to the sweet fray. So much was I a night person—a player in all-night card games, a dropper-off of dates at three or four in the morning—so congenial did I find the night that, one quarter at university, when all my classes met in the morning, I decided to sleep days and stay up nights.

Time has never again seemed so expansive as it did during that quarter. I would return from my classes, eat a light lunch, and sleep till six-thirty or seven. After arising, watering and feeding myself, I searched for distractions: movies, television, ball or card games. Not the least pressed for time, I schmoozed with all and sundry. Generally, I socialized till eleven or twelve and then I returned to my room with its hot plate, box of tea, small record collection, and books.

I might study for two or three hours. Then I found myself alone, no one else up in the student quarters in which I lived, at three in the morning, with nothing to do but read or listen to music, or both, till roughly eight in the morning. I went to a school where only great books were taught, so these free hours allowed me time to read some merely good books, for which I was hungry. I read, as I recall, chiefly novels: Christopher Isherwood and John O'Hara and Truman Capote and Evelyn Waugh; also lots of Edmund Wilson's literary criticism, which I had just discovered. I drank dark tea till my nerves achieved a fine jangle; I greeted the rising sun with a slight palsy of the hands: wired, happy, ready for class.

After my classes, I returned to bed and began the entire cycle again. This period of time lasted ten weeks and, from my present perspective, is something of a blur, but it was, it seems to me, time deliciously well spent. It also gave me the first evidence of my taste, and even minor talent, for solitude.

Something there is about being awake for sunrise that gives pleasure. The only exception to this that I can recall are those times, also at college, when I decided to stay up all night to cram for an examination. My junior year at school I discovered, through a friend, the stimulating effects of the pill known as Dexamyl (or was it Dexedrine?). These little pellets allowed me to stay up round the clock while mastering narratives of English history. They also, toward sunrise, set my heart pounding at a furious clip. I can recall my heart clanging away in my chest as I sat in a classroom giving three significant effects of enclosure on British politics and five reasons for the bloodlessness of the 1688 revolution. By the time I got back to my room, my heart was playing a very up-tempo version of "Take the A Train." I used to think of it as studying English history with only a slight threat of death behind it. Nothing, though, that twelve or fourteen hours of sleep couldn't cure, and always did.

I have been fortunate in my sleep life. For one thing, the night, from as far back as I can recall, never held any terror for me. Not even as a small child did I imagine monsters in the corner, snakes under the bed, spiders on the spread, or anything else that might go bump in the night. The chief reason for this, I suspect, was that when I was a child my family lived in fairly small urban apartments and my parents were always nearby, so the element of fear was largely removed, as it wasn't for children who lived in large two- and three-story houses. I have no memories of nightmares. I had the reverse of nightmares—sweetmares, night-delights? I remember often dreaming of being in possession of marvelous things—elaborate electric trains, entirely realistic metal cap pistols, vast quantities of bubblegum—that weren't available to children during World War II. Toward morning, I regretted having to wake and, alas, give them up.

So well do I generally sleep that, when I roll round in bed for more than fifteen minutes or so before falling off, I consider it a troublous night. Occasionally, and at no set intervals I can make out, I will hit a dread night of insomnia. Usually, this comes about less from anxiety than from the condition I think of as a racing mind. Too much is flying loose in my skull: words and phrases for things I am writ-

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ing, obligations, trivial yet nagging memories, and (the last step, the nail in the mattress) fear that, owing to not being able to sleep, I shall be tired and blow the next day. I roll, I turn, I mutter, finally I surrender and get up. Less than an hour's bleary reading or listening to the idiot chatter of a late-night television talk show generally does the trick, and I slog back to my bed, where Somnus almost always agrees to treat me more hospitably.

True insomnia of the relentless night-after-night kind must be absolute hell. Such a torture is it that I don't for a moment believe Bertrand Russell, who said: "Men who are unhappy, like men who sleep badly, are always proud of the fact." I have a number of friends who have suffered from insomnia. One walked about with the dark-rimmed eyes of a raccoon to prove it. Another friend suffered insomnia and (non-clinical) paranoia, which allowed him to stay up most of the night and think about his enemies. Once, in Florence, I suffered an extended—that is, roughly two-week—bout of insomnia, not at all helped by a too-soft bed and an almost continuous flow of motor-scooter traffic vrooming past my hotel window. I tried to concentrate on pleasant things: small animals I have loved, tennis courts in the rain, giraffes cantering off into the distance. None of it worked. All I was finally left to think about was the longing for sleep itself—a topic always guaranteed to keep one awake.

Insomnia has its own small place in literature. Ernest Hemingway deals with the subject in his story "Now I Lay Me," which is about a wounded soldier in World War I who is recovering in a military hospital but unable to sleep. He is afraid that, should he fall asleep, "my soul would go out of my body." The soldier, who tells the story—and it seems a very autobiographical story—remembers every trout stream he fished as a boy and invents others, he says prayers for all the people he has known, he imagines what kind of wives the various girls he has met would make. He allows that some nights he must have "slept without knowing it—but I never slept knowing it," which is exactly what the sleep of insomnia often feels like.

F. Scott Fitzgerald cites Hemingway's story at the outset of "Sleeping and Waking," his essay of 1934. Fitzgerald himself suffered insomnia, beginning in his late thirties, and became something of a connoisseur of the illness, if that is what it is. He tells of a friend, awakened one night by a mouse nibbling on his finger, who never slept peacefully again without a dog or cat in the room. Fitzgerald's own insomnia began with a battle with a mosquito, which he won, though only in a Pyrrhic sense, for ever afterward he was haunted by what he called "sleep-consciousness," which meant he worried in advance whether he would be able to fall asleep. With an imagination for disaster, he prepared for sleeplessness, setting by his bedside "the books, the glass of water, the extra pyjamas lest I wake in rivulets of sweat, the luminol pills in the little round tube, the notebook and pencil in case of a night thought worth recording."

Fitzgerald's insomnia took the not uncommon form of dividing his sleep into two parts. He slept, that is, until roughly two-thirty, then woke for a cruel ninety-minute or so intermission during which pleasant fantasies (of playing football at Princeton, of wartime heroics) availed him nothing. He was left, awake against his own desires, to think of the horror and waste of his life: "what I might have been and done that is lost, spent, gone, dissipated, unrecapturable. I could have acted thus, refrained from this, been bold where I was timid, cautious where I was rash." And so he tortured himself, until, like a reverse mugger, sleep beautifully snuck up on him, and his dreams, "after the catharsis of the dark hours, are of young and lovely people doing young and lovely things, the girls I knew once, with big brown eyes, real yellow hair."

Vladimir Nabokov was another insomniac, though he referred to himself instead as "a poor go-to-sleeper." (That " . . . *iac*" suffix has something sad or reprehensible about it: hemophiliac, hypochondriac, paranoiac, kleptomaniac, none of them jolly conditions.) Easy sleep was a matter of amazement to him, so much so that he found something vulgar about people who slept easily: "People in trains, who lay their newspapers aside, fold their silly arms, and immediately, with an offensive familiarity of demeanor, start snoring, amaze me as much as the uninhibited chap who cozily defecates in the presence of a chatty tubber, or participates in huge demonstrations, or joins some union in order to dissolve in it." The fact is, Nabokov not only didn't like but rather resented sleep, which put his

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endlessly inventive mind temporarily out of commission. He calls sleepers, in *Speak, Memory*, "the most moronic fraternity in the world, with the heaviest dues and crudest rituals."

Perhaps if one had a mind as richly stocked, as assailed by perception, as happily imaginative as Vladimir Nabokov's, one wouldn't wish to turn it off either. But enough writers have suffered from insomnia to make it seem almost an occupational disease. De Quincey, Nietzsche, Jorge Luis Borges, who once referred to the "atrocious lucidity of insomnia," all knew its horrors. Borges is the only one to write his way to a cure—specifically, through "Funes the Memorius," his wonderful story about a young man who dies from what one can only call a memory overload.

Does insomnia inflame the imagination? Or is an inflamed imagination the cause of insomnia? But then, too, life can deal out punishment of a kind that allows no easing even in sleep. After his wife's death, Raymond Chandler reported: "I sit up half the night playing records when I have the blues and can't get drunk enough to get sleepy. My nights are pretty awful." Sufficiently awful, it turned out, for Chandler, during this period, to attempt suicide.

Even as a middle-aged adult I have known the condition of not wishing to turn off my mental machinery and retire to sleep; and I have also known the pleasure of awakening eager to turn it back on. Most nights, though, I am ready to close up shop, pack it in, send up the white flag, not of surrender, but of cease fire. Sleep on such occasions seems a marvelously sensible arrangement. But on other nights sleep seems an inconvenience, a drag, even something of a bore.

What removes some of the boredom is that one can never be sure what awaits one in sleep. "But she slept lightly and impatiently," writes Robert Musil in his story "The Temptation of Quiet Veronica," "as someone for whom the next day there is something extraordinary in store." Sometimes it seems there are quite as many states of sleep as of wakefulness: light sleep, troubled sleep, restless sleep, wakeful sleep, deep sleep, well-earned sleep. People talk, walk, snore, and emit semen in their sleep. They may be more receptive of the truth when asleep than when awake. "To sleep:" as the man with the notably receding hairline said, "perchance to dream. . . ." Not much perchance about it.

Envy has long ago begun to desert me, but I admit to feeling it for people who seem not to require much sleep. Those who can get by, indefinitely, on four or five hours of sleep a night have a small jump on the rest of us. I myself require six or seven hours of sleep, which beats by a bit the line from the old song that runs: "I work eight hours, I sleep eight hours, that leaves eight hours for fun." Still, the prospect of sleeping roughly a third of one's life away is more than a little dismaying.

But then who among us would like to be presented with a careful accounting of how he has spent his time on earth? My own might look something like this: sleep—slightly less than one third of total; watching men hit, chase, kick, and throw various-sized balls—eleven years, seven months; reading—thirteen years, four months; following the news—three years, six months; eating and activities connected with digestion—four years, eleven months; daydreaming and hopeless fantasizing—five years and seven months; gossiping, sulking, talking on the telephone, and miscellaneous time wasting—undeterminable but substantial. . . .

As a fellow mindful of time, I tremendously dislike the notion of losing any of this valuable substance. Worry about the loss of time must kick in at a certain age. I know that it has been more than two decades since I have been able to stay abed later than seven in the morning with a good conscience. When I have, I feel as if the day has quite escaped me. Yet I recall reading with admiration, in *Howards End*, about the character Mrs. Wilcox, who spends entire days in bed, paying bills, answering letters, taking care of the small but necessary details in her life as well as recharging her batteries. I have also heard, as doubtless we all have, about people who in defeat, or more often in depression, repair to their beds and do not emerge for days, sometimes weeks. Not getting out of bed for weeks at a time—there's something, I find, rather enticing about that. My guess, though, is that I could not last more than an eight-hour stretch, and then I would lose to guilt whatever I gained in rest.

Sleeping in some beds, of course, is more pleasurable than sleeping in others. From childhood memories, doubtless by now nicely coated with nostalgia, I recall the comfort of sleeping on trains, with the clickety-clack of

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the tracks beneath, the stars above, the occasional lights from towns passing by. I have only read about sleepers on airplanes, which were in service, I gather, during World War II; or at least I recall A. J. Liebling remarking that, trying to sleep in a bed on a military transport, he heard his watch and pen, in a bedside table, rattling around "like dice in a crap-shooter's hand." It would have been nice, though, I imagine, to have watched the sky pass as one awaited sleep. As a boy, I would have been delighted to have slept in a bunk bed; I only did so later in the army. I have never slept in a hammock. The idea of camping out-of-doors, which I also had a taste of in the army, could only be made tolerable to me today if I could find a campsite where room service was included. Sleeping in the cramped quarters of a submarine wouldn't be easy for me. Sleeping alone in a hotel in a king-size bed, on the other hand, gives me the willies.

I often go to sleep with music playing. My bedside clock radio has a sleeper function, which allows the radio to play for a specified amount of time before it clicks off automatically. Usually I go to sleep listening to classical music. Cello music is perhaps most soporific. Opera music, with only rare exceptions, doesn't work: too much blatant emotion. Most modern music is hopeless for sleeping. (Glenn Gould also slept with his radio on and said that sometimes the news got into his dreams.) But nothing puts me out faster than Chicago Cub games broadcast from the West Coast. When heard late at night from a prone position, the droning of the announcers, who with their impressive assemblage of clichés are describing a game in which there is nothing whatsoever at stake—a Mickey Finn could not be more effective.

It is 4:15 in the afternoon, and, owing to my having had less sleep than usual the night before, I am beginning to grow a bit tired. So I walk out to mail a few letters, and on the way back I stop at the public library a block or so away to pick up a copy of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*. The brief walk in the fresh air has put me in the perfect mood for a little nap.

I betake myself to the couch on which I do my serious napping. I remove my glasses, loosen the belt on my trousers, slip out of my shoes, rest my feet on a small black leather-covered footstool, and set my head against the back of the couch. I call out to my cat who chooses not to join me (she is napping elsewhere in the apartment). I am, for the next thirty minutes, history—sleeping with my head back and, I believe, my mouth open. I am now nicely fortified for the longish drive I have to make out to the western suburbs to meet with cousins for dinner. A bit of water over the eyes, a rinse of mouthwash, and, yo! I'm on my way.

I do not recall having had any dreams, but if I did they must not have been worth remembering. I tend not to dream, at any rate not very vividly, when napping. My dreaming during the night seems to me, if I may say so, rather commonplace, even a little drab. By setting us to the task of interpreting our dreams, Sigmund Freud put us all on the road to being both novelist and critic of our own sleep life. Beginning well before Freud, though, there exists a lengthy literature on the meaning and function of dreams. To what extent one's dreams provide the key to one's unconscious and subconscious still seems to me very much, after all these years, in the flux of controversy. From time to time—less often than I would like—people I love who are dead show up in my dreams; I long for them not to leave, but, like the electric trains, cap pistols, and bubblegum of my childhood, they, too, inevitably depart. Many of my own dreams are sheer whimsy. The other night, for example, I dreamt about a bespoke suit that cost only $150. When I asked the woman in whose shop I saw it how she was able to produce such a suit at so a low price, she authoritatively answered: "Simple—low quality material and poor workmanship."

When I have nightmares, I find I am able, after only a brief spell, to turn them off, rather as if I am changing television channels. In fact, sometimes I will gain semi-consciousness during such nightmares and quite lucidly announce to myself, who needs this? and then turn over and await another dream. In sleep, if not in actual life, I seem to have something akin to a satellite dish with almost endless channels available to me.

Along with the whimsy channel, I seem fairly often to find myself on the anxiety channel. My dentist informs me that I am a man who grinds his teeth at night, a sufferer from the dental problem known as bruxism, which these anxiety dreams must help along. One of these dreams, in fact, which comes up perhaps

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once a year, is about losing my teeth, or at least a few key teeth. Occasionally, I have a mugging dream, in which I find myself in a hallway or on a deserted street confronting two or three young guys, one of whom has a knife, who want my money. Usually I am able to change channels, or I simply awake, before any violence is done.

My more common anxiety dreams, though, have to do with my making a great fool of myself in public. The setting here is invariably pedagogic. I have agreed to give a lecture or to teach a course on a subject about which I know absolutely nothing: Persian literature, say, or astrophysics. Screwup follows hard upon screwup. I cannot find the room; I have lost my notes; I need frightfully to make water. "Persian literature," I begin, before a large crowd well stocked with Iranian faces, "is extremely rich." And then I realize that I do not know the names of any Persian writers apart from Omar Khayyám. I hem. I haw. I wonder what extraordinary hubris propelled me into agreeing to deliver this lecture in the first place. "Persian literature," I continue, "is more than extremely rich—it is highly varied. Take the case of Omar Khayyám. . . . "

When young, I had a student variant of these anxiety dreams in which I walk into a final exam of a course I have not attended all quarter long. The course is inevitably on a subject that is abstract yet also specific—Boolean algebra, say, or eighteenth-century musicology—something, in other words, that I cannot bluff my way through with stylish writing. Particular knowledge is needed, and, in these dreams, particular knowledge is exactly what I never have. Now, thirty years later, as a teacher rather than a student, in my dreams I still don't have it.

I occasionally have more ordinary nightmares: squirrels or possums or other animals with sharp claws are crowding in on me. A thief is at the window, but I cannot muster the energy to shut it as he begins to crawl in. I am traveling to Europe by plane, and I cannot locate my luggage, my tickets, my wife. Time is running out. I am never going to make it. As I say, all these seem to me fairly commonplace dreams. I have had only a single dream in which the Nazis figured, and it was connected, as I remember noting, to no recent book or movie or discussion of the subject I had encountered. It just came up arbitrarily—out of the dark, one might say. I am just not much of a world-historical dreamer.

Unlike Graham Greene, who kept a dream diary that has recently been published under the title *A World of My Own*, and whose dreams had a richness that make my own scarcely worth changing into pajamas for. Greene regularly dreamed of popes and heads of state and dictators. He dreamed of spying; in one dream, he helped capture Hitler. His dreams have a political line—they are reliably anti-American. Living and dead writers drop in with some frequency. Kim Philby recruits Ernest Hemingway to work for the Communists in Hong Kong. Evelyn Waugh, in another dream, shoots W. H. Auden. Henry James joins Greene on a river trip to Bogotá. T. S. Eliot queries a line of a poem he has written and turns out to be wearing a mustache. Greene's nightmares have to do with birds and spiders and urinating *crevettes* and *languoustines*. But in a darker, a true writer's, nightmare, his publisher cannot be talked out of praising the novels of C. P. Snow.

Graham Greene refers, in this book, to his dreamworld as "My Own World" in contradistinction to "the world I share," which is his designation for the real world. Impressively rich though the world Greene shared was—filled with mistresses, politics, intrigue, literary success, religious crises, and the rest of it—his Own World is even richer. With dreams of the kind he records, I should imagine he could hardly wait to get to sleep at night.

But then artists have always been dreamers. Maurice Ravel felt that because they do spend so much time dreaming, even when awake, it wasn't fair for artists to marry. In my own case, though much of the material of my youthful fantasies—world fame, sexual conquest, appalling riches, enemies nicely discouraged—has lost its allure, I still manage to spend a goodly portion of my waking hours in a semi-dream state. I wish I could tell you more precisely than I can what it is I daydream about, but so vague, not to say misty, are these little sallies on which I float off that they are quite unmemorable and insubstantial. I am in a gentle clime; I drive along a blue coast in a convertible with a grandchild seated next to me; I have written something immemorially beautiful.

Many years ago, I read in a biography of Hannah Arendt that Miss Arendt set aside an hour every afternoon, during which she lay on

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a couch in her Manhattan apartment and did nothing but think. I kitchen- or rather couch-tested this procedure and found I was unable to concentrate that long when on my back; in fact, engaged in concentrated thinking, I soon dozed off. Most of my thinking, if thinking it really is, comes in inconvenient spurts while daydreaming: in the shower, at the wheel of my car, with a book in my hand, while napping, just before falling off to sleep at night. For me, stray—and occasionally useful—thoughts, if not responsibilities, begin in dreams.

I was of that generation of children who said their prayers before going to sleep. I cannot recall whether doing so was my parents' or my own idea. But the prologue to the prayer I said was the standard one that ran:

> Now I lay me down to sleep;
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
> If I should die before I wake,
> I pray the Lord my soul to take.
> God bless my mother, my father . . . .

Looking at these words in cold type, this little prayer seems quite terrifying—at least for a small child—holding out as it does the distinct prospect of imminent death coming in one's sleep. Beyond a certain age—nowadays I suppose it is eighty—it is thought extremely good luck to be allowed to die in one's sleep. She just slept, and slipped, away, one reports of some deaths, usually with a suggestion in one's voice of the mercifulness of the arrangement. Departing thus does deprive one of the drama of possibly uttering profound last words—"More light!" "What is the question?" "Trade Kingman!" "Is it a little hot in here, or do I imagine it?"—but most people, I suspect, would be willing to forgo those last words for a calmer because unconscious departure.

Shelley refers, in the opening lines of *Queen Mab*, to "Death and his brother Sleep!" Sleep itself has been called "little death." It's not a bad description of the phenomenon of sleep. To fall asleep, after all, entails a letting go, a giving up of consciousness, a journey to one knows not where. As with death, so with sleep, no one knows with certainty what awaits on the other side: nightmares, sweetmares, brief (one hopes) oblivion.

I have described my prowess at napping, or the art of napping in action. What I have not gone into is the secret behind the attainment of this prowess. In no small part, it has to do with wanting a time-out—with wanting out of life, not deeply, not permanently, but at least for a while. The English writer A. Alvarez, in a book titled *Night*, allows that he has become addicted to sleep—that he finds it no less than, in his own word, "sensual." He remarks that in his adolescence and twenties he chiefly thought about sex; once he married and that department of his life was in order, in his thirties "the obsession with sex was replaced by an obsession with food"; and now, in his sixties, this has been "usurped by a new obsession: sleep."

I wonder if the larger meaning of the obsession with sleep isn't a slow, albeit unconscious, preparation for closing up shop. I wonder, too, if this is such a bad thing. I know many people will despise this notion, arguing that one must never give in, give out, give up. They will claim, with much right on their side, that life is too precious a gift for one to permit it to slip away of one's own volition—in effect, for one to welcome death. Stay in the game, turn up the music, keep fighting, they will argue, plenty of time for napping in the grave. And they are, again, right.

Yet there is something marvelously seductive about sleep, and especially about a nap, which might best be viewed as a lovely and harmless touch of cheating, comparable, if one wishes to talk about sleep in terms usually reserved for sex instead of for death, to an afternoon tryst. As an artful napper, a nap remains, in my mind, one of life's fine things just so long as, when napping, one doesn't dream that one has been made some fantastic, some really quite impossible to refuse, offer by Harvard.

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Dissing the Middle Class

The View from Burns Park

GORMAN BEAUCHAMP

WHEN MY WIFE DETERMINED TO BUY A DOG, it was clearly understood that all the responsibility for its care and feeding would be hers. Post-nuptial agreements being what they are, I have spent endless hours walking the aforementioned dog—a pony-sized Russian wolfhound named Nina. Against my better judgment, I have become much attached to this sweet but simpleminded creature with huge soulful eyes and a brain the size of a pea. We have bonded, Nina and I, on our walks, and I am even forced to admit that I have benefited from them, for they have made me perforce more reflective. Except for dodging joggers and pondering the infinite fascination every canine feels for every pile of excrement left behind by every other canine, there is very little to do while walking a dog but think. With Nina straining at the leash as my stimulus, I have thought a lot about a lot of things, but particularly about the things immediately around me on our walks.

Increasingly, I have come to reflect on my neighborhood—and, through it, on the pleasures and wonders of middle-class life in America. Nothing about my reflections will seem remarkable, except that this neighborhood is an unlikely one to elicit them and I an unlikely candidate, professionally speaking, to entertain them. As a professor of literature, at an elite and ultra politically correct university, I am almost contractually bound to feel contempt for the crass materialism of bourgeois existence—but, somehow, I don't. My dog walks have hastened a sort of conversion experience into retro-Babbittry, where I would rest content, a closet Biedermeier, if I thought that the world that it reflects could last.

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Mine is a pleasant, comfortable neighborhood in a pleasant, comfortable university town—Ann Arbor, Michigan. My neighborhood, called Burns Park, is a lower-upper-middle-class one, comprised of largish houses on quiet, shaded streets, inhabited largely by the professoriat of the University of Michigan, its apparatchiks and like-minded professionals. In its demographics, Burns Park is hardly a typical American middle-class enclave, as evidenced by the practice of one contentious colleague of flying the American flag on patriotic holidays so as, he claims, to annoy the neighbors. The level of education in Burns Park is much higher, of sophistication much greater than the average suburban community: a residency requirement of, say, three college degrees per couple would not significantly diminish its population density. Subscriptions to the *New York Review of Books* outnumber substantially those to *Reader's Digest*, and now and again a book discussed in the former was written by someone in the neighborhood. Probably at least one member of each household watched *Middlemarch* on PBS and owns something by either Laura Ashley or Ralph Lauren. While one in nine Americans holds a passport, the ratio is much higher in Burns Park, where passports seem to be used with some frequency. In the little Italian village of San Gimignano a couple of summers ago, who should my wife and I run into but an artist acquaintance who lives a block away! Something of the ethnically unusual nature of the neighborhood may be suggested by the fact that, in the three years that I have been walking Nina, three different people have stopped us to address her in Russian, which she listens to attentively and seems to understand—at least as well as English.

Like similarly constituted enclaves in Cambridge or Palo Alto or Madison or Chapel Hill, Burns Park is resolutely secular. The Sunday-morning ritual most devoutly observed, I suspect, is perusing the *New York Times*, while weekly recycling represents our closest approximation to communion. In this seedbed of political correctness, locals believe in saving the whales, banning handguns, boycotting grapes, and respecting a woman's right to choose (except, of course, to choose to wear a fur coat). At our dry cleaner's the message printed on the side of the recycle box, urging the wise use of *America's* resources, has been amended in magic marker to read the *world's* resources: we are *that* politically correct. Hereabouts, the Burns Park liberal is a recognizable and easy-to-parody type, who, despite being regularly reviled in the local (Republican) press, nevertheless sets much of the city's tone and agenda. Ann Arbor's first female mayor was, predictably, a liberal democrat whose house faces the park.

In all these ways, then, Burns Park is anything but your average

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middle-class community; and—the ethos of today's cutting-edge academic being what it is—to suggest that in other, even more fundamental ways it *is* Middle America to the core would cause many of my neighbors, if not to bristle, at least to arch an eyebrow in a barely perceptible twinge of distaste. Yet the truest statement that I ever heard about my estimable neighborhood was uttered by a colleague in the English Department: "Ah yes, Burns Park—where they vote left and live right." That, as they say, hit the nail on the head. And what I like about Burns Park is precisely its living right: its comfortable, affluent, secure middle-classness.

Seven to eight in the morning and six to seven in the evening are the prime caninical hours, when most of the neighborhood dogs—and their numbers appear legion—get walked. For Nina, a *passeggiata* through the park is essential, to see and be seen by the other dogs, preen, compare notes, sniff butts, flirt, and do her best grande-dame routine. In the mornings, when the park is empty except for the occasional jogger, a small band of owners defy city ordinance, risking a twenty-five-dollar fine, and unleash the beasts for a free-for-all romp—up, down, and around the sledding hill. The Burns Park Dog Play Group, as they think of themselves—my wife is a charter member, I am not—hold that they are defending individual liberties against an oppressive bureaucratic system, but they run when they see the dogcatcher. Evenings are, caninically speaking, more sedate. Then the park—a large, sprawling, shady, nondescript, user-friendly place—is awash with people: the tennis and basketball courts full; soccer games on one field, softball on another; parents with toddlers in strollers and children playing on slides and in sandboxes; here and there picnics; and later, when it's dark, couples romancing on benches behind trees. The tableau, on any late summer afternoon, radiates comfort and well-being.

And the same aura permeates not just the park itself but the surrounding neighborhood. It is spring as I write, and the yards of the homes are full of tulips, of every variety and hue, and daffodils and jonquils and narcissus; soon will come the irises and peonies and poppies, and so on through all the summer flowers and into the mellow golds and purples of the asters and chrysanthemums of autumn. Freud writes somewhere that a hallmark of civilization is the prizing of beauty that has no utility: his example of such useless but civilizing beauty is the cultivation of flowers. As I stroll past house after house adorned with flower beds and window boxes vivid with color and pattern, the truth of Freud's observation proves itself upon my pulse. The cultivation of flowers bespeaks a circumambient civil-

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ity, a calm harmony of effect. Even the noises—children playing, the jangle of a Good Humor truck's bell, a snatch of piano being practiced—blend into a muted patina of sound. At dusk, when warm light pours from the windows and Nina pauses to decode nasally the wet patches left on tree trunks by her predecessors, I can—the excuse obvious—stand patiently and peer into houses to see who and what is being had for dinner. Sometimes the soft convivial sounds of a cocktail party or a backyard cookout reach the street. The doors of houses in Burns Park frequently stand open, even after dark.

These open doors amaze my parents who, not long ago, moved out of Houston, Texas, because the elderly woman who lived in the apartment below theirs was beaten to death by a drug addict. They had also been the victims of burglars and, three times, of car thieves. When they come to visit us, then, they are surprised and anxious at the casual approach that we take to locks: we leave our car in the driveway overnight, not only without employing their omnipresent device The Club, but without even locking its doors (although we do, usually, remember to take the keys out of the ignition). But it is our leaving the doors to the house open that troubles them most. Don't we know what can happen?

Well, yes and no. We know what a dangerous place much of America, particularly urban America, has become; but we know it vicariously from watching the news and reading the papers. Ann Arbor is fifty miles from Detroit; our local television news emanates from Detroit stations and is filled with murders, arsons, carjackings, robberies, assaults—crimes of often unbelievably gratuitous brutality. Such news is, of course, no longer news, but the standard dispatches from urban battlefields across the nation. There is no doubting the truth or frequency of such horror tales—the media seem obsessed with them—but from the vantage point of Burns Park, they might as well be fiction. I do not mean to say, of course, that even the safest middle-class havens are unaffected by crime—public spending policies alone, for police and prisons, disprove that—or exempt from the occasional, random intrusion of violence. Still, nothing could be further removed from the urban war zone depicted on the nightly news than the flower-filled placidity of Burns Park, where children play without fear of being shot and doors can be left open in the evening. Although Detroit is only fifty miles away, the turmoil and tribulations of its underclass seem as remote as those of Bosnia or Rwanda.

I think that I am supposed to feel guilty about this, about the disparity between how I live and how they, the dispossessed and the downtrodden, live. Liberals, after all—and I am, vestigially anyway, a liberal—require themselves to feel guilty most of the time for most of

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the bad things in the world. There is no respite for the worrying class. A minor but instructive example of this phenomenon appeared in a travel article that I read a year or so ago by Jack Beatty, an editor at the *Atlantic*, on the Berkshires. It was a generally delightful piece on a wholly delightful place, but an undercurrent of self-censure runs through the article—How could one enjoy the "decadent" blandishments of the Berkshires when so much of the rest of the world was so badly off? The elegant picnics at Tanglewood recall to him "the small, dark, dented green lunch bucket that my father carried to his job every day . . . and I feel inexpressibly sad." The liberal conception of sin is sociological, not theological; and Beatty seems to feel that he has sinned against the proletariat, all those blue-collar workers with bologna sandwiches in dented green lunch boxes, by luxuriating in the refined pleasures of Lenox and Stockbridge while they (the fathers) can't.

Liberalism generates a sort of neo-puritanism, holding that to enjoy oneself in this vale of tears is wrong, possibly wicked, while "the masses" suffer in poverty and neglect. By contrast, the "seductively complacent message of the Berkshires," Beatty suggests, reassures visitors: "You are all right; this society of ours—yes it has troubles, but fundamentally it's all right too, full of beauty and culture and well meaning people." As an antidote to such seduction, he seems almost relieved to have attended a play at the Williamstown Theater dealing with the Holocaust—so guilt-inducing and "so relevant" in a time of ethnic cleansing, as one of the actors later comments to him. Thus, for Beatty, a specter is haunting the Berkshires, the specter of Bosnia, and it prevents one from succumbing entirely to its Norman Rockwell all's-right-with-the-world enchantments.

I know nothing more of this writer than what is revealed in the article, which generally is quite engaging; but clearly he is no heavy-duty ideologue. All the more significant, then, that his sojourn—or at least the published version of it—should be shadowed by events halfway around the world and memories of pleasures beyond the reach of working-class parents. Such darkling notes, however, add a "serious" dimension to what might else have seemed merely an escape into the playground of the privileged—that is, a vacation—and justify at the *Atlantic* running a piece that otherwise would have celebrated only museums, restaurants, and antique shops. Evident here is the liberal's genuflection to the shrine of guilt as a necessary irrelevance: necessary to salve his conscience—I am a morally sensitive person, who, even in Lotos Land for the summer, remains anguished and aware—and irrelevant because there is no indication of any change in behavior, no sense that next year's reservations are to be canceled owing to angst.

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C. S. Peirce, in one of my favorite definitions, defined a belief as a disposition to act. Applying this definition to today's PC holier-than-thouism provides some much-needed perspective. In the cinquecentennial year of Columbus's voyage to the New World, the National Council of Churches condemned the settling of America by Europeans as genocidal theft perpetrated against the Indians (or, if one prefers the current terminology invented by Washington bureaucrats, Native Americans). I did not, however, in that year or in any other, see report of a member denomination's handing over its property to any Indian tribe—for use, say, in preserving tribal culture, as a gambling casino. The council's pronunciamento resembled nothing so much as breast-beating while wearing a bulletproof vest—not, that is, calculated to inflict much pain. Saki, in one of his pre–World War I stories, sketched precisely such a type, still as much with us now as then: "When she inveighed eloquently against the evils of capitalism at drawing-room meetings and Fabian conferences she was conscious of a comfortable feeling that the system, with all its inequalities and iniquities, would probably last her time. It is one of the consolations of middle-aged reformers that the good they inculcate must live after them if it is to live at all." When living in a nest of tenured radicals, it is useful to recall how much more tenured they are than radical.

Still, the question remains: Is middle-class comfort purchased at the expense of an impoverished underclass? Does my living well condemn others to living ill? How so—and how many? Is there any nexus at all between the violent stories of the evening news and the tranquil security of my evening walks? I have no idea. I am profoundly depressed when I read about the little girl in Washington who has planned what dress she wants to be buried in, so certain is she that she will not survive long in her dangerous neighborhood. But—in Lenin's famous phrase—what is to be done? Alas, the answer is: probably not much. One can contribute to this charity or that, help out in good causes, but—absent the arrival of the revolutionary's pipe dream of a socialist millennium—none of this brings about or is meant to bring about a fundamental change in how we live. So I have left off hand wringing over all the things that I didn't cause and can't cure. I traffic in no illicit drugs (have not for this last quarter century), participate in no drive-by shootings, bear no personal responsibility for the rising pregnancy rate among unwed teenage girls. With, of late, a roof that had to be reshingled and a lot of plumbing that had to be replaced, both at big-time expense, I feel far more exploited by, than exploiting of, the working class. In any event, when I go to the Berkshires, I go to enjoy myself: that week Bosnia and the *lumpenproletariat* must take care of themselves.

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Many years ago when I was a student living in Hong Kong and trying to learn some Mandarin, I went to Chinese movies to improve my comprehension of the language. The most memorable of these films was one on the life of the infamous Empress Wu, China's equivalent of Catherine the Great. It opened with a scene of a mounted courier riding furiously to pass some obviously precious packet to another courier who tears off to the next station to pass the packet to another courier—and so on across North China to Peking and ultimately to the Imperial Palace. The content of the packet, brought so effortfully from the distant mountain peaks, was then revealed to be—ice. Ice to chill the emperor's drinks.

What struck me so forcibly about this scene, I remember, was the realization that I could have, any time I chose, all the ice I wanted simply by opening my refrigerator door. In this respect, as in countless others, the material level of my life—a young person of no consequence, living on a modest stipend—was markedly superior to that of a powerful emperor of medieval China—the reason being, of course, modern technology and its general diffusion. The standard of living that I enjoyed in Hong Kong was quite high compared to that of most colony residents, but, by American middle-class norms, it was wholly unexceptional, accustomed as we are to a degree of comfort-providing technology that in much of the world would still seem incredibly luxurious if not miraculous. Access to such technology is, obviously, by no means limited to the American middle class, but surely no other group has benefited more or been transformed so thoroughly by it. Small elites, in certain eras and in certain ways, have doubtlessly been more favored than we are, yet can there have been in all recorded history as many people as materially well-off as the American middle class in the twentieth century? Modern technology democratized privilege, and we have been the primary beneficiaries.

So, as I walk an expensive-to-maintain wolfhound through streets noticeably free of wolves, I ponder with some awe and much gratitude how well fed, well clothed, well housed—historically, how very pampered—we are. Consider all that we have to eat, not just the volume, but the variety of it. For the average child of Victorian England, an orange was rare enough to make a desirable Christmas gift; for today's middle-class middle schooler, the lunchtime orange is eaten—or tossed—without a thought. Only something very exotic or very expensive—like beluga caviar or a Chateau d'Yquem—lies beyond the reach of an average American family. Otherwise our markets overflow with foods of all sorts all year round. Entering the local greengrocer, with its bins full of produce of every sort, from artichokes to zucchini—indeed, from bok choy to tomatillos—I am put in mind of

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Pope's description of Belinda's dressing table in *The Rape of the Lock*: "Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here / The various offerings of the world appear." Even in the dead of winter, raspberries are available from Chile and melons from Latin America. Although Ann Arbor is hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean, our fish markets offer everything from Norwegian salmon to pompano to mahimahi—all, we are assured, "fresh caught." And all this, to italicize my point, is available to, affordable for the ordinary American middle-class consumer.

Television images of stores during the receding days of Communism in Europe showed only empty shelves and bedraggled customers who had waited hours to purchase bare essentials—and then been disappointed. Much worse, of course, were the pictures from Ethiopia or Somalia where the Malthusian checks of famine, war, and plague yielded images of children dying from hunger in their mothers' arms—conditions far closer to the norm of history than is our own efflorescence of abundance. So as I stroll through any of our suburban malls or supermarkets, surrounded by their vast array of food and clothes and gadgets (TVs, CDs, VCRs, fax machines, cappuccino makers, Cuisinarts) that all seems so ordinary to us, I am amazed that we are not more amazed.

Instead of celebrating this abundance, however, we tend to cavil and carp. If *60 Minutes* or *20/20* or *Dateline* were to do a segment on food, it would surely concentrate on some problems related to it—the dangers of pesticides, the questionable nature of growth hormones, the inadequacies of poultry inspection. No crisis, no news. As Jeff Greenfield put it: "For journalists, the worst possible lead for a story is that what was, still is." So, journalistically speaking, we must always be in crisis. Shortages are news in America; plenty isn't. Conditioned by this crisis-du-jour mentality, we see the glass half-empty rather than half-full, even when it is really nine-tenths full. It's not wise, of course, to emulate Pollyanna, closing one's eyes to the real problems attendant on our affluence. But it's even less desirable to run around like Chicken Little, scaring oneself silly over daily reports that the skies are falling. Some historical perspective would help but seems largely absent from the collective middle-class psyche, we being notoriously neoteric and future-oriented people.

Believers (at least until recently) in Progress—the faith that today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better still, inevitably—Americans have come to expect, perhaps as their due, an ever-improving quality of life. Ironically, this view actually serves to discount, to undervalue the progress that has been made: *of course* we have a chicken in every pot, but is every pot in a microwave—and every

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microwave solar powered? The social scientist Nicholas Rescher, on the basis of extensive attitudinal surveys, formulated what he called the Paradox of Progress: "Progress produces dissatisfaction because it inflates expectations faster than it can actually meet them. And this is virtually inevitable because the faster expectations actually *are* met, the faster they escalate." The American middle class embodies this paradox: on the one hand, insufficiently appreciative of their privileged moment in history and what brought them to it, and yet expecting, on the other, that there will always be more and better in their future, a New, Improved Tide *every* year. The discontent inherent in the paradox may, indeed, constitute the very dynamic of the process, which is not altogether a bad thing. So, I'm not knocking the desire for more and better (the precondition, probably, for getting them), I'm only wondering at our obliviousness to the unprecedented good fortune that we do enjoy.

To return, then, to my comparison with the emperor of China: I am warmer in the winter (central heating) and cooler in the summer (air conditioning) than he was; I get more and better information faster and more reliably than he did; I can get to any destination more quickly and comfortably; I am (most likely) in less pain less of the time and get better medical care; I see better longer (bifocals) and have better teeth (fluoride) and a dentist who uses Novocain; and while he may have had a golden bird to sing for him—okay, okay, that was the Byzantine emperor—I have Rosa Ponselle or Ezio Pinza or Billie Holiday or Edith Piaf or any one of literally hundreds of performers whose voices I have on my shelves and can summon up with the flick of a couple of switches.

The emperor, by the way, if I remember correctly, was strangled to death by his wife, the sort of thing that happens but seldom in Burns Park.

The other day I checked out a book of literary criticism from the library. Written by a professor at Stony Brook, it was dedicated to Ho Chi Minh, had *America* spelled throughout as *Amerika*, presented itself as a call to revolution, and was published by that noted anti-capitalist enterprise, Random House. The book appeared in 1971 and has about it the flavor of bell-bottoms, Nehru jackets, and platform shoes; one trusts—hopes—that today the author is suitably embarrassed by it. In a less virulent and less jejune formulation, however, the same animus toward America, capitalism, the whole bourgeois ethos marks much of the culturati of the twentieth century, particularly since the 1960s. While wading through the book of the Stony Brook revolutionary, I also read an article in the *New York Times Magazine* on the black-

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Jewish conflict; simply in passing, with no explanation (presumably none was needed), the writer—an African-American, recent graduate of Yale, and published author—declared: "I find more to despise about America each day." No doubt after a few more days he will join one of the leaky boatloads of emigrants fleeing to Haiti or Cuba, don't you think? Well, no—of course he won't, there being, among other reasons, no such flotillas of boat people heading *that* way.

Such spasms of rage of a privileged class (to lift the title of Ellis Cose's recent book on the black bourgeoisie and its discontents) have themselves a privileged status among the intelligentsia: *of course* you have every right to despise this unjust, racist nation—that condemned you to an Ivy League education and to publish in one of its leading journals of opinion. In *The Rage of a Privileged Class*, Cose points out (over and over) that precisely the best educated, most successful, most affluent blacks assess most negatively the quality of American life: "Those who should be celebrating are still singing the blues." While they may differ from most of the middle class, in this regard they harmonize perfectly with the dominant culturati, who, like my Burns Park neighbors, think left and live right. This "dissing" of middle-class values and modalities by the intellectual stratum of the middle class is one of the curiouser phenomena of our age.

A couple of years ago I taught, and plan to teach again soon, a course called Class and Money in American Fiction. We began by reading Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick*, the paradigmatic tale of the poor-but-honest lad who, through hard work, self-denial, clean living, and some well-deserved luck, achieves, not riches (Alger's heroes, despite the popular conception to the contrary, never became really rich), but a secure footing on the ladder of middle-class success. Primitive as literature, suspect as sociology, *Ragged Dick* nevertheless effectively embodies the capitalist myth of opportunity—and it inspired generations of boys from Knute Rockne to Dwight Eisenhower. After Alger, we read a dozen or so novels that belong (more or less) to what has come to be called, in lit-crit circles, the canon. As a result of class discussions, I became more aware than I had been before that all these works were—to a greater or lesser degree, usually greater—anti-middle class. Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and London's *Martin Eden* are openly socialistic and *The Grapes of Wrath* very nearly so; *The House of Mirth* and *The Great Gatsby* mock the *haute bourgeoisie*, while *Babbitt* and Philip Roth's *Goodbye, Columbus* savage the *petite*. And so on, through the syllabus. Although I don't select the readings for this or any course according to an ideological quota system, I nevertheless began a mental search to come up with a novel that at once depicted middle-class life favorably and was good literature (the operative crite-

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rion for the latter being availability in a paperback edition). I couldn't think of one. I asked a couple of Americanist colleagues, and they couldn't think of one either. Maybe some late John Marquand, one suggested, but these are hard to come by. James Gould Cozzens, perhaps. Nah, too dull. Even Booth Tarkington's *Seventeen*, a tongue-in-cheek suggestion, is not available in paperback.

In one sense, this paucity doesn't surprise, given the intellectual climate of our century. Modernism, the aesthetic mode that dominated twentieth-century arts and determined our critical standards, has been resolutely anti-bourgeois, arising, as it did, in reaction against the *gemütlich* certainties of the last century, against the Victorian glorification of decency and decorum and duty. In its radical break with the past—"On or about December, 1910 human nature changed," Virginia Woolf famously declared—modernism rejected those fundamentals of middle-class life (family, country, religion) that have come to be called, in our political shorthand, "traditional values." Such values, wrote the middlebrow writer Alfred Noyes back in 1942, "the arbiters of our intellectual fashions have tried for so long to sneer out of existence. . . . In the literature of the pseudo-intellectuals and neo-pagans all over the world, the sapping and the mining has been carried on, with a curiously malicious ardor of concentration, confusing all the lines of right and wrong, and all the loyalties of mankind." A decade earlier the very highbrow and ultra-modernist poet T. S. Eliot had praised the equally highbrow and proto-modernist poet Baudelaire for demonstrating that in our century "damnation is itself a form of salvation—of salvation from the ennui of modern life." Going to Hell, that is, is better than going to Scarsdale.

It won't do, of course, to identify morality with the middle class and immorality with modernism (though both have been done). But it is clear that modernism in all its forms—and they are many, varied and complex—deprecated the received notions of bourgeois normality. In his recent book *The Intellectuals and the Masses,* John Carey argues precisely that a deep-seated contempt for ordinary, suburban, middle-class life—for average, "decent" people—constitutes the core of modernism. Even its vaunted technical difficulties serve intentionally, he contends, to exclude "the common reader" from admission into the groves of arcania. Carey's interest is in England in the first third of the century, but, with new examples substituted for old, his thesis could be applied to America in the last third of the century. Today's post-modernist attempts *épater le bourgeois* grow increasingly desperate and inane. For example, sculptor Janine Antoni displayed at one New York gallery six hundred pounds of lard that she had

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chewed up and spat out, her "metaphor for a society that is always after the binge, the fast fix." Or the "performance artists" in California whose art, a "political statement," consisted in giving away ten-dollar bills from an NEA grant to illegal aliens as they crossed the border: aesthetically sophisticated, the aliens performed off with the money.

Such spasms from what wants to be an avant-garde but can't bring it off do not, so far as I know, constitute the standard artistic fare of any of my neighbors. Still, in its dilute and trickle-down forms, modernism remains the aesthetic and intellectual worldview of my sort, my subclass of the middle class, even as the artists and thinkers who practice it pour contempt on who we are and how we live. Someone once said that the penance that white liberals undergo for being who they are is a form of self-torture called "The Arts." That would explain a lot, including the attenuated forms of radical chic commonplace in midwestern university towns wanting to be hip.

In the late 1960s, as a graduate student, I attended a meeting to plan a grape boycott, where an organizer from Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers was to speak. He began by declaring that, if our only reason for being there was to assuage our liberal guilt, we weren't really wanted. I considered this for a moment, could think of no other reason for being there, and left. I have wondered since what else he could have imagined would motivate a lot of generally privileged college students to spend Saturdays walking around in circles in front of Kroger's carrying silly signs in the hopes of raising the price of their groceries. I wish now that I had stayed on to hear his reasoning. In any event, this episode has come to symbolize for me the politics of Burns Park.

The neighborhood, as already indicated, is notoriously liberal and votes predominantly Democratic, while areas of equivalent socioeconomic status, even in Ann Arbor, tend to be heavily Republican. So, too, if we attended primarily to our own economic self-interest, I and my neighbors would probably vote much more conservatively than we do. Perhaps social issues—abortion rights, gun control, civil liberties—prove more determinative of whom we support and why. Perhaps aesthetics plays a role, the visceral repugnance at the thought of being linked in any way with Jesse Helms or Phil Gramm or the hair style Kay Bailey Hutchison. But the truth is, I think, that the appeal of liberalism is mostly moral, depending on the belief that one owes something to those less fortunate. Take the issue of health care. I have good health insurance; the proposal of President Clinton for universal coverage or anything close to it would do nothing to benefit

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my family; in fact, if any new health care system were to result in higher taxes and/or consumer costs, as seems inevitable, it would be to my disadvantage, economically. Yet I support, in principle, a program of universal coverage—so long as it does not reduce my own coverage in any way or restrict access to physicians of my choice. In other words, I support policies that are not necessarily in my own material self-interest, if they seem to be for the general good—and if they remain vaguely distant and impalpable. And in this regard, I imagine that I am very like my neighbors. However desirable might be more drug rehabilitation centers or shelters for the homeless—and these are the sorts of public expenditures we strongly support—most certainly we would not want them in our backyard or, preferably, even on a direct bus line to Burns Park. Public policy is one thing, proximity quite another.

But even this liberalism-at-a-distance may have begun to atrophy as the fortunes of the middle class have begun to decline. It is no longer news that the glory days of the American middle class are over: white-collar jobs are disappearing rapidly and today's college graduates will, it is said, never equal the status or buying power of their parents. Kevin Phillips in *Boiling Point: Republicans, Democrats, and the Decline of Middle-Class Prosperity* points out that those now reaching middle age (35–44) are only half as wealthy, after inflation, as their parents had been at the same age and that the situation will be even worse for their children. Owning a home on a par with those in which they were raised increasingly eludes the offspring of the middle class—and so on, through a litany of evidence of economic decline.

In such an atmosphere, the sort of disinterested generosity that underlies the Burns Park sort of liberalism will, I suspect, evaporate. Such generosity depends on a certain comfort level that, in turn, depends on the times being good: we are charitable when we are flush. In tough times we look more to our self-interest. A subtle but decided shift toward personal and practical consideration can be noted, then, even among the erstwhile do-righters of my neighborhood, who, as a whole, have probably remained as untouched by the economic tempests buffeting the middle class as any group can be—such being the cushioning effects of tenure at a large, financially stable university. Still, even in the placid precincts of Burns Park can be felt—or at least I feel—a vague sense that we are dancing on the decks of the *Titanic.*

Apocalyptics—Chicken Littles with their ever-falling skies—have always struck me as more than a little ridiculous. Still, as I walk Nina through these quiet, spacious, anything-but-mean streets, I cannot escape the premonition that all this is doomed. Not immediately, of

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course, not in my lifetime, nothing so dire as that; but the era of middle-class ascendancy—"life as we know it"—is drawing to a close. I cannot escape this sensation that we are in, not the twilight—that's *too* apocalyptic—but the leisurely late afternoon of a phenomenally successful historical epoch, the golden age of the middle class.

Behind the closed doors in Burns Park occur, no doubt, all the ills that our flesh is heir to: terrible illness, marital discord and abuse, addiction and delinquency and depression. In no sense, of course, are we immune to any of that: the great sorrow of my own family is that our only child is autistic. So I am not wanting to suggest that American middle-class life as we live it is necessarily happier or better or more spiritually enlightened than that of other classes or other cultures or other times—only that it is more comfortable, more cushioned, and, frankly, more desirable. With the exception of some middle-class kids in the sixties who developed downward aspirations and took off for rural communes in Vermont to drill for maple syrup, the voluntary traffic has been mostly one way—toward middle-classdom (or, if possible, beyond). Very few seek to escape Belmont for Roxbury or Bellaire for the barrio. And yet among intellectuals generally, American-style materialism stands in ill repute: the Pope has encyclically condemned it and—far worse hereabouts—the Frankfurt School and Susan Sontag have said hard things about it. "Consumer culture" has about it much the same negative resonance as "bourgeois values" when uttered by a college sophomore. Econo-moralists chastise us for disproportionate hogging of the world's resources, for our fascination with fashion over function, with the fad du jour.

In the face of such criticism, I can only confess to a sense of exhilaration—at times, anyway—in walking into a Sears or a supermarket, into Pier 1 or Eddie Bauer or Builders Square or Baskin-Robbins or Lord & Taylor or—for that matter—Kmart. There is simply so much there, so much to choose from, so much to buy, and I, for one, love the superabundance and wouldn't want it any other way.

South University, the street that separates the campus from Burns Park, is lined with fast-food restaurants, cappuccino bars, bookstores, T-shirt shops, and one jewelry store—a small mom-and-pop jewelry store, but the real thing, no schlock. I get batteries for my watch there, take in items for repair, occasionally buy a pair of earrings for my wife (nothing very lavish, as she'll attest). The owners are gentle, helpful, old-world types, always with friendly smiles. But they have come to represent for me emblems of our vulnerability. A few months ago, two men entered their store in broad daylight, beat and robbed

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them, and escaped without anyone in the street noticing anything amiss. Infinitely worse crimes occur, no doubt, routinely across the land—but not so close to home, not on the edge of Burns Park. Is this intrusion of brutality into our civility, I wonder, an anomaly or a harbinger?

Paul Horgan

1903–1995

Contributor, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

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The Wrestle Home

TIMOTHY E. THATCHER

Did we wrestle as children?
You the towheaded younger brother,
I the older, darker one.
I don't remember now.
I remember instead a different
kind of touching,
the day I sliced my knee down
to the bone—muscle, fat and
skin dropping like a flap
from the kneecap.
The neighbor boy ran home
to warn our mother,
and we struggled through
the long walk together, crying.
I cried from pain, you from fear,
but you stayed, thin arm
around my waist, my arm
pressing your small shoulders,
as I bled into my boot,
my sock squishing in the blood.
Did you hear it?
Did I laugh, light-headed,
when we finally reached home?
I remember that now,
but maybe I'm wrong.
The pain was gone by then,
numbed, but you weren't.
You were there, bearing
half my weight.
That's why I laughed.

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I was safe, looking down
at all that boy-blonde hair.
I'd known you'd get me home.
I still have the scar,
almost forty years later.
In summer, it's bright
against the tan; in winter,
it throbs somewhere deep inside.
I'm glad it's there,
reminding me of the day
I leaned on you.
My boyhood brother-love
comes back then,
in very present tense.
I never told you, did I,
that the wound and blood are not
what I remember of that day,
that I remember your knees buckling,
not mine,
that I remember your determination,
not mine,
that I remember?
It's time—past time—I do.
On your wedding day,
I stood at the edge of the crowd
and listened to your vows.
Now, when we embrace, I must
look up to see your face,
whiskered like mine, eyes
a barely shared and shifting blue.
We look alike, no longer
dark and light.
I thought, this is the little

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brother I carried on my back,
a false memory that pleases me,
an image I created out of
fantasy and fact: the way
it should have been.
I was the older, after all.
Did we ever wrestle muscle
to muscle? In competition?
I don't recall.
Our matches were a different sort,
deeper than flesh, a struggle
of souls fighting desperately
for separateness, while
never letting go.
That day you took a bride,
I saw the little boy
who bore my weight,
blonde hair flashing in the sun,
tears shining on his face,
muscles straining,
wrestling both of us home.
That's the struggle I remembered,
our long, slow walk together.
I felt your arm around my waist again.
I feel it now.
I always will.
Yet another kind of touch,
bearing up my weight.
Did we wrestle as children?
Oh, yes, of course we did,
leaking blood and tears,
tramping that gravel track.
Holding each other, we made it
home that day, and yet . . . for me,
we're still wrestling on the road.
We never stopped.

✪ TIMOTHY E. THATCHER, who is currently working on a novel, lives in Puyallup, Washington.

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Public and Private Intellectuals

CYNTHIA OZICK

THE TERM "PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL" has been in fashion for some time now, but its embodiment has always been with us. Socrates was what we would call a public intellectual; and so were Isaiah, and Maimonides, and Voltaire, and Emerson. But observe: presumably not Aristotle, not Montaigne, not George Eliot, not Santayana. George Eliot presided over a salon, of which she was the undisputed center and engine; and still we would not cite her as a public intellectual. Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy were certainly public intellectuals; Lionel Trilling was not.

If there are public intellectuals, it must follow that there are also private intellectuals. What is the difference between them? It cannot be a difference of substance or subject matter. William James, despite countless public lectures, was not really a public intellectual; Emerson, who confronted many of the same themes, was. And it cannot be simply reticence of temperament that separates Lionel Trilling from, say, Irving Howe, an almost prototypical public intellectual. And if we could clearly define the difference, is it important, would it matter?

There recently came into my hands a thin little chapbook, bound in the pallor of an aging blue and entitled *The New Disorder*, containing remarks set down in 1941 by E.M. Forster. Now you may instantly object: Why bring up Forster, a novelist, an artist, in the context of the public intellectual? The reason is this. Before we had the dispassionate phrase "public intellectual," there was a simpler name in general use that appeared to cover everyone who attends to, and rallies around, and pokes at, and palpates ideas. That name was "thinker." No one can deny that Forster, though distinguished for fiction, was

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also a thinker. He surely took up literary issues, but now and then he touched on political issues, the hallmark of the public intellectual. *A Passage to India* is inevitably read as a protest against British colonialism in India; that it escapes the fate of tract is a measure of both Forster's delicate and indelicate art. And his indelible epigraph to *Howard's End,* "Only Connect," is, after all, a slogan as political in its intention as it is private.

But beyond the novels there are the essays—preeminently "On Liberty in England," a talk delivered at an international writers' conference in Paris in 1935. Here Forster defends freedom of expression and attacks censorship, particularly of homosexual writing. And here also he situates himself as any number of writers and intellectuals situated themselves in the 1930s: "As for my politics," he tells his audience, "you will have guessed that I am not a Fascist—Fascism does evil that evil may come. And you may have guessed that I am not a Communist, though perhaps I might be one if I was a younger and braver man, for in Communism I can see hope. It does many things which I think evil, but I know that it intends good." In 1995, it goes without saying, these latter words are achingly hollow; and there were some for whom they were terribly hollow even sixty years ago.

But let us return to my little blue pamphlet. It is now 1941; England has been fighting Hitler for two years; in December Pearl Harbor will catapult America into the war. Fascism's evil, recognized as such by Forster six years earlier—the force that "does evil that evil may come"—is furiously at work. In Germany and elsewhere the Jews have been stripped of citizenship and are now official prey, ready candidates for a destiny that, while perhaps not yet overtly revealed as murderous, has already plunged whole populations into unspeakable suffering and degradation. Once again the occasion is a writers' conference, this one the seventeenth International PEN Congress. "We had with us," Forster wrote afterward, "representatives from about thirty nations, many of whom had suffered, all of whom had cause for fear. Politics had not ignored them, so how could they ignore politics? . . . [T]hey valued literature only if it helped their particular cause or what they regarded as the good of humanity." He acknowledged that his speech was politely dismissed; the Congress "reverted to what it considered important and did not discuss the issue raised." And the issue Forster raised, in 1941, was this: "Art for Art's sake? I should just think so, and more so than ever at the present time. It is the one orderly product which our muddling race has produced." He offers history as proof: "Ancient Athens made a mess," he says, "but the *Antigone* stands up. Renaissance Rome made a mess—but the

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ceiling of the Sistine got painted," and so on. He ends by citing Shelley—the usual quote about poets as unacknowledged legislators.

As an adolescent English major in college, I know I would have warmed to this, and taken it as my own life's credo. I did, in fact, do exactly that. But nowadays I look at this date—1941!—and wonder how, with all of torn-up Europe dangling from German jaws, Forster could dare to take the view from Mount Olympus. No one can tell him he is in error: the Sistine Chapel *did* get painted, the *Antigone does* stand up (though Forster seems to have forgotten what it stands *for*). But suppose Sophocles had been run through by a tyrant's sword, or suppose Michelangelo had been taken off and shot? Then there would be no play and no painted ceiling. Art may well be the most worthy of all human enterprises; that is why it needs to be defended; and in crisis, in a barbarous time, even the artists must be visible among the defending spear carriers. Art at its crux—certainly the *Antigone*!—doesn't fastidiously separate itself from the human roil; neither should artists. I like to imagine a conversation between Forster and Isaac Babel—let us say in 1939, the year Babel was arrested. History isn't only what we inherit, safe and sound and after the fact; it is also what we are ourselves obliged to endure.

And just *there*, you may conclude, is the distinction between the public intellectual and the other kind. Public intellectuals know that history is where we swim, that we are *in* it, that we can't see over or around it, that it is our ineluctable task to go *through* it; and that we may not murmur, with Forster, Look: the past came through; so will we. The difference, then, between public intellectuals and others, must lie in activism. Well, I am not so sure that this is a sufficient difference. There are activists and there are activists, as Vanessa Redgrave might say—she who, recently mellowing, observed in the *New York Times* that "there are Zionists and there are Zionists." Presumably the acceptable Zionists are the ones most closely sympathetic to their anti-Zionist adversaries.

So I begin to deduce that it isn't merely activism, but also something we may call loyalty, that touches on the responsibility of intellectuals in a democracy. Thinkers, after all, do not simply respond to existing conditions; in the buzz, confusion, and chaos of the Zeitgeist, they strive to sort out—namely, to formulate—the cognitive and historic patterns that give rise to public issues. That, we can suppose, is what Forster thought he was doing when he picked out art for art's sake as the salient issue of 1941. Why this choice was a disappointing one hardly demands analysis. Yet even in 1949, when Forster wrote his postscript to that talk—at an hour when the ovens were scarcely cooled and the D.P. camps were filled with wandering ghosts—he did

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not acknowledge that his 1941 formulation was inadequate to its own context. "I realized," he had admitted in 1941, living in Cambridge, protected by the British army, "that as soon as I myself had been hurt or frightened I should forget about books too." Still, he continued, "even when the cause of humanity is lost, the possibility of aesthetic order will remain and it seems well to assert it at this moment. . . . I hope it is not callous to do this, and certainly no callousness is intended."

Intended or not, the callousness was there, but not because Forster was in any way a callous man; the absolute opposite is true. Out of the turbulence of a Europe in extremis, he had formulated an issue, as thinkers are wont to do, and he had formulated it badly. He put an ideal above immediate reality: the reality that kills. You might protest that Primo Levi did the same when he recited Dante from memory in Auschwitz; but that was because he had the privilege of being a slave laborer rather than a gassed corpse. If you are still barely alive in Auschwitz, it is possible that poetry will salve your soul; but if you are comfortably alive well beyond the inferno, the exaltation of art as that which excludes suffering does take on the lineaments of callousness.

How do we know when a thinker formulates an issue badly? In just this way: when an ideal, however comely, fails to accord with deep necessity. In 1941, "blood, sweat, and tears" is apropos; a dream of the "possibility of aesthetic order" is not. It is not sufficient to have beautiful thoughts while the barbarians rage on. The best ideal then becomes the worst ideal, and the worst ideal, however comely, is that there *are* no barbarians; or that the barbarians will be so impressed by your beautiful thoughts that they too will begin thinking beautiful thoughts; or that in actuality the barbarians are no different from you and me, with our beautiful thoughts; and that therefore loyalty belongs to the barbarians' cause as much as it belongs to our own. I offer a contemporary example from a new book, a collection of somewhat dated political essays by an important Israeli novelist and public intellectual. She is talking about the Golden Age of the intifada:

> Ask an average Israeli what the intifada is and he'll answer: stones, Molotov cocktails, road blocks, chaos. There is also another intifada. When schools are closed by order of the authorities and children study regularly, clandestinely, in private homes that have been organized into classrooms, this, too, is intifada. When a person plants ten eggplant seeds by the side of his home so that he will not be dependent for vegetables on stores that are ordered to be closed almost daily, this too is intifada. . . . And when instead of [obedience to] the *mukhtar,* an active and industrious village committee is elected, one that goes into people's homes, deals with welfare, food supplies, all the

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current problems, and the entire committee is made up of women—this is a very interesting facet of the intifada.

It is indeed. Never mind that a movement dedicated to violence, injury, and death, and to the destruction of the writer's own polity, is here being praised on grounds of self-reliance and the progress of women. These beautiful thoughts omit noting that schools were shut because they were teaching incitement to riot; that the clandestine schools did the same; and that the order to close food stores came, not from the Israelis, but from the intifada leaders themselves. The trouble with having beautiful thoughts about the virtues of rioters is that you are tempted to insert lies into the very heart of those beautiful thoughts, even if they are only lies of omission.

As a footnote to this, allow me to append a paragraph of a letter from a well-loved friend, a writer who in 1938, at the age of ten, escaped Nazi Vienna on a Kindertransport and was reared and nurtured and sheltered and supported and educated by Christians and Christian organizations in England—with "more staying power," she comments, "than Jews and Jewish organizations." She and I have been arguing over the predicament of Israel for more than thirty years. "Good loyalists don't make the best reporters," she chides me. "You are a partisan, not a historian. Facts, truth-telling! you cry, and I believe that you believe this to be synonymous with love for the Jews. The difference between you and me is, was, and will remain that I consider loyalty a dangerous good unless, with Hillel, we require ourselves to be decent to the bastards on the other side, against whom we are not to witness falsely or even carelessly in order to prove how better we are."

A beautiful thought, and incontrovertible. But it is undermined by the omission of its inevitable corollary: let us also require ourselves to be decent to our own side, concerning whom we are not to witness falsely or even carelessly in order to prove how *worse* we are. Without such loyalty—an unpopular notion nowadays—you may find you are too weak in self-respect to tell the truth or to commit yourself to the facts.

Some will say, how is it you have the gall to use so unforgivably denigrating a term as "barbarians"? What of the humanity of the Other? Are we not all equally flawed, equally capable of mercy? Mark Twain, in *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg*, speaks of "evil joy," a shuddery phrase. Only a fantasist will not credit the reality of the contagion of evil joy; the world engenders it; it exists. There are those—human beings both like and unlike ourselves—who relish evil joy, and pursue it, and make it their cause; who despise compromise,

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reason, negotiation; who long ago canceled out the humanity of the Other. The responsibility of intellectuals *must* include this unhappy recognition, or it is no responsibility at all.

The responsibility of intellectuals includes also the recognition that we cannot live above or apart from our own time and what it imposes on us; that willy-nilly we breathe inside the cage of our generation and must perform within it; and that to perform within it—and within a jurisprudential democracy—means to have the courage of loyalty, which is scarcely the same as partisanship. Partisanship implies a party line; loyalty signifies, simply enough, love of the family that nourished you and taught you the principles of moral reciprocity.

People who *think*—whether they count as public intellectuals or the more reticent and less visible sort—are above all obliged to make distinctions, especially in a time of mindlessly spreading moral equivalence. "We have met the enemy and he is us" is not always and everywhere true; and self-blame can be the highest form of self-congratulation. People who are privileged to be thinkers are obliged to respect exigency and to admit to crisis. They are obliged to expose and war against the rampant coinages that lead to public deception. "Diversity," for instance, an Orwellian term meaning its opposite, turns out to be a new version of the feudal system: know your assigned place, and keep to it. "Multiculturalism" turns out to be the promotion of mediocrity or worse, as well as a degrading exercise in group-think tokenism and victim competition. "Environment," interestingly, stands both for end-of-the-world apocalyptic cultism and for "Society made me a criminal."

But all that is no more than the expected response to stale issues already long on the table. The more serious burden is on those political intellectuals who have the capacity, and the inclination, to formulate fresh public issues from new perspectives: they are obliged to formulate them in so careful a way that their propositions will not seem callous or morally embarrassing or downright despicable sixty years afterward.

At the end of the day, a rule can perhaps be hammered out: those who favor the guarded life should not risk contemplation in public. Contemplation in public is what political intellectuals commonly do and what the quieter private thinkers on occasion slip into doing, not always by mistake. The private thinkers have the advantage of being written off as bunglers when they do speak out, or as cowards when they don't. But for the public thinkers, who are always audible in the forum, the risk is far more perilous, far more destructive to the honor of a generation: they risk being judged mistaken.

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Letter from Normandy

JOHN LUKACS

THE TOWN OF BAYEUX—five miles inland from "Gold" Beach, at Arromanches—was taken by the British on the first day of their landing in 1944. It was one of the few towns in Normandy hardly damaged by the fighting and the bombing, unlike its neighbor Caen that was largely destroyed, since the Germans had held on to it for weeks. Bayeux is a pleasant little town with a moderately impressive cathedral, many flowerbeds arranged in the courtyards of its municipal buildings with their classic buttery stone façades, and brilliant colors in the clear autumn air. An old waterwheel flanks a placid rivulet next to a museum where the Bayeux Tapestry is housed.

It is from here, and from these very beaches nearby, that William had set out to conquer England in 1066, nine hundred and twenty-nine years ago this October. And conquer he did, with the greatest consequences for the history of England. Men flushed with victory do not always have a proportionate sense of occasion. William must have had some of that. He had a tapestry made soon after his victory at Hastings, to commemorate his great enterprise. For a long time people—and the local tradition—attributed the embroidery to William's wife; but it is almost certain that the work was done by English embroiderers, ordered by William's half-brother Odo, the bishop of Bayeux, and was to be eventually placed in his cathedral (which had not yet been built in 1066).

The Tapestry is not only a venerable relic but also an astonishing work of art. It is 231 feet long and 20 inches wide. The needlework is in worsteds of eight colors. It depicts a long story, including the preparations and the intrigues preceding the Normans' invasion and then the crossing, the landing, and the battle. The sequence of the scenes is nearly complete: only the end of the strip, the post-Hastings portion, has been lost. (Perhaps this is for the better: would there have been some excessive adulation of the conqueror and victor?) Along the margins of the strip runs a continuous narrow fringe of

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heraldic animals, and above the scenes a running Latin commentary in what, for the eleventh century, is amazingly classic and clear lettering. Most startling is the fineness of the design. The angularity of the figures is not at all primitive—there is a near-perfect suggestion of their movements throughout. When we think of a tapestry, we think of a great wall hanging, a *gobelin;* but the Bayeux Tapestry is a strip, a veritable cartoon, an art form perhaps especially familiar to twentieth-century Americans; and (to paraphrase Henry Adams) the evolution of cartoon figures from those of this eleventh-century masterpiece to those of, say, Saul Steinberg is sufficient to refute all the theories of Darwin.

However, it is the meaning of the Bayeux Tapestry that grips me as I move slowly past its glass case with the crowd, as I contemplate it, as my mind wanders. Napoleon knew that meaning. In 1803 he had this strip of cloth removed from Bayeux; he ordered it to be exhibited in Paris. That was when he laid his plans for *his* invasion of England. He had a sense of history; 737 years after William, he wanted to remind the people of Paris of that first invasion, just as he wanted them to remember Charlemagne when, in December 1804, he brought the pope to Paris to crown him emperor, the first emperor of France receiving his crown from a pope after almost exactly one thousand years. However, by that time he had given up his plans for an invasion of England; and the precious band of linen was brought back to Bayeux.

It is 1995 now, and I am thinking of Hitler. Had he invaded England, would there have been another episode in the history of the Bayeux Tapestry? Perhaps not: the German occupants left it where it was during World War II. (During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 the people of Bayeux rolled it up and hid it from their potential German occupants.) But, had Hitler invaded England, he would have been its first conqueror in nine hundred years, with incalculable consequences, greater than those of William's invasion in 1066. William had conquered England and added it to his dukedom in Normandy. Had Hitler conquered England, he would have added it to his already acquired European empire. William won his war against a king of England; Hitler would have won his world war.

He came close to that. So many people are inclined to think of him as a madman—and of the entire, rapid, and dramatic history of his rise and fall as a crazy episode in the history of the twentieth century, as if the collapse of that horrible episode had been inevitable, foreordained from the beginning. It wasn't so; and two things come to my mind here, in Bayeux.

One is that—like William, and unlike Napoleon—the Germans

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could have made a successful landing in England in the summer of 1940. The British army, reeling back in defeat from Dunkirk, was unready. The British navy—which in 1803 could have blown the ships and barges of the approaching French into smithereens—in 1940, in the air age, could not have destroyed the invading forces of the Germans. (Against parachute landings it would have been useless. Besides, the British, including Churchill, were loath to risk their entire fleet for one desperate battle in the Channel. They—again including Churchill, who said that much to Roosevelt—knew that if the Germans were to conquer Britain, the only card in the hands of a future British government, seeking some kind of peace with the Germans, would be the existence of the fleet.) There are at least two British military writers who, during the past fifty years, wrote books speculating about a German invasion of Britain; both think that it could have succeeded.

And—this is now roiling in my mind—what would have happened then? We know something about that, here and there, from Hitler's own words. He had always wished for an alliance with the British Empire. Now he would have that—on his own terms. He would have taken few colonies—perhaps none—from the English. His steely fingers would have clamped down on England—but clothed in a velvet glove. England was not Poland; he did not want a new province for the German empire. He wanted a British government that would make peace with him, that would administer Britain but in accord with his wishes; he wanted a British government that would accept his domination of Europe, a government and a people that would accommodate themselves to being a minor partner of the continental Great German Reich, discarding their hopes across the Atlantic, for a partnership with the United States. And what would Roosevelt have done—what could he have done—then? "Fortress America," well and good; but the isolationists and the America Firsters would have been proved right: it was futile and wrong to tie the destiny of the United States to the cause of Britain, to a combat against Germany in a war that the Germans had already won.

More was involved here than the power of German arms; and more than what had happened nine hundred years earlier—that is, the conquest of one kingdom by another. What Hitler represented in 1940 was a new elemental force in the history of the world, the force of an idea, a wave of the future (which was the title of a book that summer, published and widely read in the United States, written by the thoughtful and intelligent Anne Spencer Morrow Lindbergh.) And Churchill understood that—even better than his colleague in defeat, the premier of France, Paul Reynaud. A few days before the

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collapse of France, Reynaud made his last broadcast. If Hitler wins this war, he said, "it would be the Middle Ages again, but not illuminated by the mercy of Christ." Fine words: words symptomatic of a Frenchman of the Age of Reason, fearful of a return to the Middle Ages. But Churchill's vision was nearer to the truth. On June 18, 1940, in one of his most famous speeches, he evoked the prospect, not of a return to the Middle Ages, but of an enormous lurch into a new dark age. If Hitler wins and we fall, he said, "then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a New Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science." Note the word *protracted.* He knew that Hitler represented a new revolutionary force in the world, with a new revolutionary appeal to many people—especially in the event of his victory. Had he won, his Reich might have lasted—perhaps not for a thousand years, as he had once said, but for a long time. So Churchill's words were more apposite than Reynaud's.

But now I am thinking of 1944, not of 1940. I am no longer thinking of what could have happened in 1940 across the Channel but of what happened in 1944 here in Normandy. After all is said, Hitler did not attempt to land in England. But four years later Americans and British landed in Normandy. There may be something symbolic in their crossing the Channel along the route of William the Conqueror, but in reverse. (Hitler had expected them to land near Calais and Boulogne, reversing Napoleon's planned route.)

Now I leave Bayeux. We are driving to the coast. Fifty years have passed, and there are no sights of destruction left from the war. There are, of course, the thick spiky hedges of Normandy, the fields where the Normandy cattle graze, the clean and prosperous villages; and the American, British, and Canadian flags on many of the tourist houses and restaurants and inns, and a few signs: "Welcome To Our Liberators." (What would William the Conqueror—or William II the Kaiser—have thought of that?) Now we are in Arromanches, where there *is* a reminder of 1944, out in the water: the remnants of "Mulberry," the artificial harbor thought up by Churchill. It is a lovely day and Arromanches is as bright as a button, a few tourist buses along its main street, a warm early-September breeze bringing the salt smell of the sea softly coiling around us as we eat a nice lunch on a terrace. Then I walk into the D-Day Museum and I cannot hold back my tears.

But why? There is no one in my American family who died or fought here. I have no American or British friend who died here. I am not a veteran. Now, three months after the anniversary of D-Day, there are a few veterans wending their way through the museum.

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They are genuinely interested, but they do not seem to be particularly moved. I talk to a Welshman who had been here fifty years ago in the 53rd Infantry Division, whose regimental badges we eventually find on one of the wall displays. He had landed here seven days after D-Day. Later he was captured by the Germans. (They treated their British and American prisoners fairly well, he says.) He was *there.* He knows much more about it than I can ever know. But I know something that he did not and does not know: that he was there because of me, a European. Hitler did not want to war against the British Empire, and he did not want to go to war against the United States. What he wanted was the domination of Europe. But Churchill and Roosevelt and, with them, the British and the American people did not accept that. And their young men came here, to fight and die, for the liberation of Europe and of Europeans, including myself.

My thoughts run on and on. The conquest of 1066 was the last—and the only—conquest of England from the Continent. But 1944 was probably the last time that the armies of English-speaking peoples came from across the sea to help decide a war in Europe. No matter what happens in Europe, this will not happen again. Besides, D-Day was a turning point—more than a milestone—in the history of England. Well before D-Day there was no way for the British to win a war against the tremendous might of the Third Reich without the Americans and the Russians. But until June 1944 there were more British than Americans in actual combat against the Germans. After June 1944 all that would change. Not only was an American general the Supreme Commander; but the mass of American soldiers would carry the war forward on the western front. The diminution of British power set in. Churchill's prestige worldwide was still great, equal to that of Roosevelt and Stalin, because of 1940. But his power was diminishing. Still, if the price for the liberation of Europe meant the transfer of most of the wealth and many of the possessions of the Empire to the Americans, so be it. That was the policy of the half-American Churchill ("a half-breed," some of his enemies in London called him in May 1940). He had a larger vision, a vision that accompanied him throughout his life, a vision, again partly owing to his American ancestry. That vision was an ever closer union of the English-speaking peoples. And there he failed—for many reasons, but first of all because America was becoming less and less English.

Turning now west, along the Route Nationale 13, we see here and there some of the other beaches and German bunkers and gun emplacements. They do not seem terribly formidable, but then they are kept up only as mementos of what happened here fifty years ago. And now another thought swims up to the surface of my mind. Suppose

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the invasion had failed: What would have happened then? A great wave of shock would have run across the world—and across the minds of the American people. It would have shaken FDR's position more than Churchill's—the British had been accustomed to terrible setbacks throughout the war. But remember, too: six days after June 6 the first German rockets began to fall on London. Would there have been another invasion attempt? And where? And when? And what would Stalin have done, the Stalin who for three years had been gravely suspicious of his allies for not trying for a second front, for not relieving the Russians who were carrying the brunt of the struggle against the Germans? He would have responded to an offer of a separate peace from Hitler—whose entire strategy since late 1941 was to split the coalition of his opponents. Had the invasion failed—what would have happened with the liberation of Europe then?

But it did not fail.

We have now skirted Omaha Beach (bloody Omaha, where for an hour or two the winning of the bridgehead *almost* failed), the Pointe du Hoc (where the Rangers made a daring climb up the cliff only to find that the great German guns on the top were dummies—the real ones had been pulled back another half a mile or so); Utah Beach (where almost everything went well). At St. Laurent-Colleville is the American Cemetery. More than nine thousand graves are there, a white field of crosses. I know what I feel; but I do not know what to say. "Those farm boys from Iowa . . . those young Americans from the small mining towns of Pennsylvania . . ." I know that but I feel something perhaps too precious for words. Not so long ago I read what a Dutch woman at Arnhem had said: "They came to help us to be free again, and I feel very grateful. But 'Grateful' is too small a word. There are feelings you cannot really put into words properly."

There is a small tablet on one of the walls of the cathedral of Bayeux about the First World War. "In memory of the more than one million young men of the British Empire most of whom fell and are buried in France." The Americans who fell here in both world wars were fewer than that, thanks be to God. When those ten thousand fell here in 1944, the American empire was rising to its zenith, to the zenith of the American century in 1945. But they did not die for the American empire. They were sent here to fight and die for the survival of a civilization—a civilization that is in great danger today, fifty years after that bloody summer month. That thought burns in my head now as I am approaching Tocqueville.

The hamlet of Tocqueville is a dozen miles off the N 13, which is also the main route along which the First American Army had pushed northwest to liberate Cherbourg. It consists of a few gray stone houses

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grouped around a small church that is surrounded by a narrow oval of grass containing a few graves, among them that of Alexis de Tocqueville and his wife, the inscription of which has already grayed, most of the letters of which are now washed away. Two miles away is the Tocqueville chateau. A Tocqueville ancestor received his estate and patent of nobility from William in 1054—that is, a dozen years before the latter set out for England. It has remained in the family ever since—but now, for the first time in more than nine hundred years, there are no male Tocquevilles left. The last Comte de Tocqueville (a lateral descendant of Alexis, who had no children) had two daughters.

Alexis de Tocqueville (the two hundredth anniversary of his birth will come ten years from now) was the greatest, and most prophetic, seer and thinker of democratic civilization, the Plato-cum-Aristotle of the democratic age that had begun to rise during his lifetime. His great book about America was only one of his accomplishments, though an extraordinary one: the greatest book about a country written by a foreigner; astonishingly, much of it remains valid 160 years after its composition, though the country and nation are vastly different. The title of this famous book is precise and telling. *De la Démocratie en Amérique, Democracy in America,* suggesting, at least, that it is about democracy even more than it is about America.

Tocqueville had a vision of history that transcends the divisions Ancient-Medieval-Modern. There were the aristocratic ages, ruled by hereditary minorities; and now, in his very lifetime, the democratic age, the age of majorities, had begun. And that was irreversible, no matter what his conservative friends may have hoped or thought. But the democratic age would have its own dangers. The tyranny of the majority, enthralled by a popular leader, was one of them. Still: "I cannot believe," he wrote, "that God has for several centuries been pushing two or three hundred million men toward equality just to make them wind up under a Tiberian or Claudian despotism. Verily, that wouldn't be worth the trouble. Why God is drawing us toward democracy, I do not know; but embarked on a vessel that I did not build, I am at least trying to use it to gain the nearest port." The tyranny of the majority—Tocqueville was able to see the prospect of a Hitler—was but one of the dangers. The other was the treatment of the majority as a dumb and selfish and inchoate mass, when an incessant agitation of ephemeral novelties on the surface only cloaks an ever deepening spiritual apathy and intellectual stagnation. The question, he wrote, was no longer whether democracy would prevail or not; the question was: what kind of democracy? Would it be a mediocre order, with no great spiritual advancement, but where com-

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mon decency and prosperity would exist for a majority of people who, for the first time in history, would have risen from poverty with the help of bureaucratic government—a society held together by its respect for law and religion? Or would it be a decaying democracy—its bonds of public morality and law and order loosening—tending toward anarchy (from which a popular tyranny may be the only way out)?

For the United States this question was still open fifty years ago. Is it still open now?

Fifty years ago here in Normandy the armies of democracy liberated Western European civilization from the barbarism Hitler and his Reich had incarnated. That was a barbarism of a new populist nature, obeyed by a great people accustomed to discipline, obedience, and a military tradition. But Hitler had not only husbanded the energies of an entire people; he had married the two principal movements of the twentieth century, nationalism and socialism. There was a triangle of forces in the world then. There was liberal parliamentary democracy, represented mostly by the English-speaking and Western European peoples. There was Communism, represented by Soviet Russia alone. And there was National Socialism, risen to power among a variety of peoples, but principally incarnated by Hitler's Germany, which was so powerful that it took the combined forces of democracy and Communism to conquer it.

Fifty years later this triangle no longer exists. Hitler was defeated; and less than fifty years later, Communism, even in Russia, has disappeared. Yes, Nazi and Fascist sympathizers exist here and there, but do not worry about that; history does not repeat itself. But there is plenty of reason to worry about something else—the democratic decay that Tocqueville had feared might come, "the abyss of a New Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science," as Churchill had put it in June 1940, though he was speaking of Hitler then. But his words remain as apposite now, half a century later, when, within and without the great conurbations of the Western world, many of the signs and symptoms of a New Dark Age are rising. "The democracies have been decomposing, too," another great seer, the Frenchman Bernanos, wrote after the war, "but some decompose more quickly than others. They are decomposing into bureaucracies, suffering from it as a diabetic does from sugar, at the expense of his own substance." Bureaucracies that are less and less able to protect personal safety and dignity from the internal rise of barbarism and savagery, a rise inspired and spawned by the promotion of the sovereignty of a popular "culture" at the expense of the preservation of civilization.

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Its signs are all around us. Hitler's propagandist Joseph Goebbels wrote in 1939: "National Socialism has understood how to take the soulless framework of technology and fill it with the rhythm and hot impulses of our time." National Socialism did not quite do this; but the New Barbarians, of whom the Nazis were one variant of forerunners, did. Rhythm and hot impulses! Fifty-one years ago, in 1944, American popular music was the wonder of the world. That meant more than a subchapter in the History of Jazz. Over the Channel flew not only the big American Liberator bombers but the liberating—yes, liberating—sounds of the swinging music of the American big bands. In 1944—there are historic evidences of this—all over Europe (including Germany) those who loved American music despised the barbarism of the Nazis. In 1994 the New Barbarians (including Nazi skinheads) are the most fervent addicts of rock.

In 1944 there was a vast American working class that, with all of the narrow-mindedness of its conformism, was wondrously patriotic and conservative, upholding and representing conservative values in a country where the class struggle hardly existed at all, where the lower classes were not an underclass, where they kept rising and rising to middle-class status, where credit was given to the masses in multifarious ways, so that the national prosperity of the United States was a wonder, soon to be emulated by much of the world. In 1994 there is less and less of a working class in the United States, while there is a vast and growing underclass; where credit cards are given to the masses while they are credited with little else—because of a pervasive and corrosive cynicism that goes against the very traditions of a democracy whose institutions and public policies as late as fifty years ago rested on a (perhaps arguable, but nonetheless generous) overestimation of the intelligence of people—until now, when education, information, and entertainment in America are governed by their cynical underestimation. That is no longer an intellectual argument. Its material consequences have come. I know that I will return to a country where not only are people less safe but, for the first time in two hundred years, they are poorer than are people in Western Europe. And even Tocqueville had not foreseen that.

Fifty years from now—will there be many visitors to the American Cemetery at Colleville? That will be 2045, and I can imagine that the United States will have gone through a long period of decline and that the dollar is worth ten German pfennigs. There may still be a director of the cemetery living in his white house near the entrance, who tells a group of visiting Americans (among them, perhaps, American exiles living in France) that, for the time being, the Gettysburg National Theme Park and this last of the American cem-

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eteries in Europe were saved by a Southern senator from the budget cuts declared by the National Bottom Line Internet. "My job is still here," he might say, "but I may be the last director here, and the cemetery may have to be kept up by volunteers and the French."

That may happen. Or it may not. In any event, Churchill and Roosevelt, whatever their faults, helped to save Europe and Western civilization from barbarism fifty years ago. Save—and restore. Churchill was not a progressive, Roosevelt thought that he was one, but never mind: they were savers and restorers. At best, civilization may survive and exist, in part because of what these young soldiers fought and died for in Normandy fifty years ago. At worst, Churchill and Roosevelt gave us—especially those of us who are no longer young but who were young then—fifty years. Fifty years before the rise of a new kind of barbarism, not incarnated by the armed might of Germans or Russians, before the clouds of the New Dark Ages darken the lives of our children and grandchildren. They gave us fifty years. Perhaps that was enough.

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The Grapes of Wrath

JOHN DICKSON

Steinbeck fights for discipline.
No more books of hate and rage
like the two he vomited up and burned
after visiting the migrant camp.
Dragged families from their flooded tents,
walked miles and back to bring them food
and saw ruined Oklahoma farmers starve—
actually dying as he watched!
Finally he begins the book.
And a diary—all in longhand, all in ink—
two thousand words his daily goal.
Plays Tchaikovsky, plays Stravinsky
for the feel of it, to bring his characters to life.

Show sun-baked fields. Parched earth. The dust.
The sound of tractors, their smell of oil and heat.
The phone rings. The doorbell rings.
The radio blares too loud next door.
Be objective. Keep the discipline.
Fight the urge to shout . . . the urge to quit.
Stay in control. Fight being angry at injustice.
It's going well. It's going badly.
Don't think largeness—work from page to page.

Remember to make the soil red—not grey.
Keep Tom and Ma together. Have Grandpa die tomorrow.
The telephone. The visitors. A peddler at the door.

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The flies and heat and rain. Carpenters pounding.
Hitler won't invade the Czechs—
Germans are much too nice for that.

Slow down! Slow down! The story is growing.
Crippled cars line Route 66—
loose bearings, shattered tires, broken springs.
A gasket blows. The kids want water.
One hundred pages—near exhaustion.
Discipline the writing. The words. The language.
Two hundred pages—celebration.
It's moving along. It's falling apart.
Three hundred pages—it's no use! Tear it up!
Constant birth pangs. Frantic creation.
Slow down. Smoker's cough and eyes burning.

The book is rounding out. It's almost finished.
He feels full. He feels empty.
Has recurring premonitions of death
thirty years ahead of time. His vision blurs.
The book has grown much larger than he is.
Rain. Rain. Endless rain.
The dam breaks, flooding the migrants' camp,
engulfing the car of the composite family
who escape to a barn on higher ground
where Rose of Sharon, the composite daughter,
nurses the composite starving man.
It's finished! It's over! Now Steinbeck can die.
Now, in capital letters, it's THE END.

✪ JOHN DICKSON is the author of two collections of poetry, *Victoria Hotel* and *Waving at Trains*. His work has appeared in numerous magazines.

We are grateful to Penguin USA for permission to use material taken from John Steinbeck's diary, *Working Days*.

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My Friend Edward

JOSEPH EPSTEIN

"Do you know any intelligent people in this city?" Saul Bellow asked me one night in 1973, not long after I had met him. Before I could reply, he said, answering his own question, "I know three: Harold Rosenberg, David Grene, and Edward Shils."

All three men, along with Bellow himself, were then members of the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. Harold Rosenberg, then also the art critic for *The New Yorker*, invented the useful phrase "a herd of independent minds." David Grene, who has a reputation for being a spirited teacher, is the translator of Herodotus and the great Athenian playwrights. I didn't know much about Edward Shils—although I had read his essays in *Encounter*—except that he was a social scientist, and, when I was an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, he was known for being a very formidable figure, distinctly not a man to fool with. I only subsequently learned that he had had the decisive hand in designing what for me were the best courses I had taken at that school, the courses in the College called Social Science II and History. I was, then, already in debt to Edward Shils without knowing it. Over the following years, from 1973 until his death on January 23, 1995, this debt would grow beyond reckoning.

Perhaps because his prose was chaste, even severe, I pictured Edward Shils as tall, slender, a bit gaunt. I couldn't have been more wrong. When Saul Bellow showed up at my apartment with Edward one night, I discovered a man of five foot eight, portly (though with no flabbiness or anything soft about him), a paucity of rather wispy grayish hair, and the florid coloring that suggested the potential pugnacity of a former redhead. He carried, but didn't really use, a walking stick, and he wore a tweedy getup of various shades of brown with a green wool tie and an Irish hat. I took him, correctly, to be a man of good taste for whom personal vanity had a low priority. I watched his eyes roam across my living room, checking the books in my glassed-in

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bookcases, the prints on my walls, the plants on my windowsills. Clearly, he was, as Henry James says one must always try to be, a man on whom nothing was lost.

We dined at a Korean restaurant on Clark Street, and Edward interrogated me, calling me Mr. Epstein. He wanted to know what I was writing and for whom. He asked what I was teaching (I had begun to teach at Northwestern University that year). He inquired about what I happened to be reading at the moment. When I told him that I was reading Alison Lurie's novel *The War Between the Tates*, he tersely replied, "A book, I take it, about academic screwing." I wouldn't have thought to formulate it quite that way, but of course that is exactly what the book is about. He obviously hadn't read it, but somewhere along the way he had read another Alison Lurie novel, and, such was his ability to extrapolate, he didn't need to read any more of them. Later in the evening I described someone as a political scientist. "With the scientist understood," he inserted, before deftly conveying a bit of pork and rice to his mouth on his chopsticks, "as in Christian Scientist."

I met Edward Shils around the time that his and Saul Bellow's friendship was under great, and complicated, strain, and, for a while, I found myself in the middle, friends to them both. They had been quite close—Bellow's biographer James Atlas has told me that Edward made substantial editorial suggestions that much improved *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, my own favorite among Bellow's novels. The morning after Bellow introduced us, I told him over the phone how remarkable I found Edward. Bellow replied that Edward was his "alter super-ego." Edward would have preferred the word *conscience*, for when I knew him he never took Freud all that seriously. I subsequently learned that he performed the function of conscience for a number of people—many students along with some professors—and indeed for entire institutions. It is an invaluable service, but not one that everybody finds congenial or that pays handsome dividends to the person willing to take it up.

As Saul Bellow and Edward pulled further apart, Edward and I became closer. For me, this was an immense piece of good fortune. My friendship with Edward, it didn't take me long to realize, was to be the crucial intellectual event of my life. Although by the time I had met him I was thirty-six years old—he was then sixty-three—and had already published a book and perhaps sixty or seventy articles and reviews in magazines, not long after meeting him my writing began to change; it could scarcely have been otherwise, for so, under the influence of Edward's presence, had my view of the world. He had released something in me that made life seem richer and writing about

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it consequently more joyous. As a writer, I began to see the world as simultaneously more complex and more amusing; to feel a fine surge in confidence; to be concerned scarcely at all about anyone's good opinion—except Edward's.

A small number of people called him Ed, but it was generally a mistake to do so. He himself did not go to first names easily, and to diminutives never. I was always Joseph to him, he Edward to me. I am not sure how I was able to break through to address him by his first name, or why he early chose to call me by mine, though I am glad that this happened. He had students, acquaintances, really quite dear friends of several decades whom he continued to call Mr. or Mrs. or Miss; they usually called him Professor Shils. It was part of his formality; and Edward's formality was a reminder that the word *formality* has its root in the word *formidable.*

Edward never went out of the house without a suit or sport coat, necktie, hat, and walking stick. (The ones he carried were thick and dark, knotty and gnarled, sturdy not elegant appurtenances.) He spoke with a mid-Atlantic accent—he had been teaching half the year in England, first at the London School of Economics, then at Cambridge, since just after World War II—often with a pronunciation system of his own devising. For example, a columnist in Chicago named Kupcinet, who pronounces his name exactly as it is spelled, Edward always called Kupchinesque. When I told him that the man himself pronounced it *cup-si-net,* Edward said that it was a Hungarian name and that the columnist, ignorant fellow, simply didn't know how to pronounce his own name. Kupchinesque, in our conversation, it remained.

As someone known as his friend, I was often asked the most rudimentary questions about Edward. Is he English? people would ask. Is he Jewish? When the man who wrote Edward's obituary for the *Times* of London, a Cambridge don who I believe knew Edward longer than I, called me for information, he said: "He came from railroad money, didn't he?" Railroad money! Edward would have had a good chortle about that.

Edward's parents were Eastern European Jewish immigrants who settled first in Springfield, Massachusetts, then in Philadelphia, where Edward, the younger of two sons, grew up roaming the streets and reading his way through the public library. Edward's father was a cigar maker—Samuel Gompers, the first president of the American Federation of Labor, was head of the cigar makers' union. Edward looked like his mother, who, though her schooling had been limited, was a serious reader, especially of Russian and European novels. The Judaic element in the household could not have been strong; fetch-

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ing oysters home for dinner was one of Edward's delightful memories of a Philadelphia boyhood.

He spoke Yiddish, which he loved for its subtlety and philosophical and comical possibilities. He added to my own Yiddish vocabulary, bringing to it words that I now find myself using with great frequency, among them *hegdisch* (for serious mess), *tiness* (for grievance), *cacapitze* (for altogether trivial stuff). Sometimes he would speak in Yiddish aphorisms; sometimes he would insert the ornately precise—and often quite new to me—word.

"Joseph," he said, pointing to three thuggish-looking youths standing on the opposite corner as we emerged one gray winter afternoon from Bishop's chili parlor on Chicago's light-industrial near West Side, "note those three *schlumgazim.*"

"I'm afraid I need a subtitle for that word, Edward," I said.

"*Schlumgazim,*" he readily replied, "are highwaymen who, after stealing your purse, out of sheer malice also slice off your testicles."

Edward honored his Jewishness without observing it. In the same way, he loved America, with all its philistinism and coarseness, and he once cited it to me, approvingly, as "the country of the second chance." He reveled in the country's ethnic variety, its inventiveness, its mad energy. He loved the sort of American who could build his own house. He admired Americans when they showed they would not be buffaloed by ideas put into play by academics or intellectuals (he was himself, in many of his writings, the world's leading observer of intellectuals, in both their strengths and foibles). He knew how vast our country is, how full of surprises: that it contains people hipped on grammar from Tyler, Texas, people who read through the Loeb Classics in Santa Rosa, California, and people in other unlikely places who demonstrate heroism, a winning bullheadedness, or radical common sense.

I bring up Edward's love of America because he did not seem particularly American—in fact, as he once told me, he had deliberately set out to make himself European. He had done this, my guess is, early in life, out of his regard for the older, denser culture of Europe. At the University of Pennsylvania, where he was an undergraduate, he majored in French literature. The German social theorists—Georg Simmel, Ferdinand Tönnies, and above all Max Weber—later imbued him with a love for Continental thought and for the German language.

Not long before he died, Edward suggested that I take six months off to live in France, where I might improve my own French accent. It seemed a strange suggestion to make to a man in his late fifties who was juggling three jobs (teaching, writing, and editing). Only later

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did Edward make plain that behind the suggestion was his wish for me to internationalize myself—as he had internationalized himself.

His success in this endeavor, I should say, was complete. His reading, his diet, his manner of dress, much of his thought had become thoroughly Europeanized. But he had become a European of the kind that, as T. S. Eliot said, Henry James had become: a man, that is, of European spirit who belonged to no particular European country. Edward accomplished what Henry James did not—nor did T. S. Eliot, who turned himself into an Englishman—which was to keep the American in himself altogether alive. What was especially impressive about Edward was that he commanded deep, even intimate knowledge of several national cultures without ever losing touch with his own.

In almost every country in Europe, Edward had a wide acquaintanceship and a few close friendships: Franco Venturi and Arnaldo Momigliano in Italy, Raymond Aron and others in France, innumerable scholars in Germany, practically everyone of intellectual importance in England from R. H. Tawney through Audrey Richards to H. R. Trevor-Roper. (Had he taken up permanent residence in England and become a citizen, he would, I suspect, long ago have been Sir Edward.) In the last seven or eight years of his life, Edward attended conferences at Castel Gandolfo, the summer residence of the Pope. Edward much admired the Pope for his intelligence and character, and there is reason to believe that his admiration was reciprocated, my guess is on the selfsame grounds.

Early in our friendship, and long before he began attending the conferences at Castel Gandolfo, Edward reported a dream to me that he had had the night before. In the dream he had been made a cardinal. It was quite wonderful, he said. He wore the red hat and robes of a cardinal, and he was permitted to roam the inner recesses of the Vatican, searching its archives in complete freedom. "And you know, Joseph," he said, "no one asked that I believe any of the Church's doctrine." He paused, then added, "Jacques Maritain arranged the whole thing."

Edward lived in India for an extended period between 1956 and 1957, and he visited the country every year thereafter until 1967. It was Edward who introduced me to the splendid books of Nirad C. Chaudhuri (author of *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* and other works) and to the novels of R. K. Narayan. Narayan mentions Edward more than once in his book about America, and, on the only occasion we met, gentle man that he is, Narayan's eyes glowed with pleasure when I told him I was a friend of Edward Shils. Owing to his curiosity and imagination, Edward was able to become not merely immensely knowledgeable about but quite at home in any culture.

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Although Edward earned his living as a social scientist, he had read more literature than I, a literary man, ever expect to read. I never mentioned a writer, no matter how minor, whose work he had not read and whose measure he had not taken. He was a great reader of novels. He read Dickens over and over again. He regularly re-read Balzac. He adored Willa Cather. We once had a swell talk about who was smarter, Proust or James. Our conclusion was that James was deeper but that, in seeking out a restaurant or anything touching on practical matters, Proust would have been the more valuable man. Edward was much taken with George Eliot and thought her particularly fine on the Jewish family in *Daniel Deronda.* Shakespeare he felt was simply beyond discussion—and so we never discussed him. He taught a course on T. S. Eliot and was very respectful of his ideas about tradition, a subject to which, in his own writings, Edward was delicately attuned. Above all novelists, he admired, I believe, Joseph Conrad. He was impressed not alone with the great Pole's penetration but with his theme of fidelity. Fidelity, in the Conradian sense of duty before all else, was the ideal by which Edward himself tried to live. He owned Jacob Epstein's powerful bust of Joseph Conrad and kept it, along with a bust of Max Weber, in the living room of his Chicago apartment.

Edward's reading of the great writers of all languages was part of his grounding and his greatness as a social scientist. If Freud said he learned all he knew from poets, so perhaps ought social scientists to learn from novelists, though I suspect very few modern social scientists do. (Edward, his former student, the distinguished Israeli sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt recently told me, came to social science through literature, not the other way round.) He also felt it his duty to stay *au courant* with contemporary culture, however empty and irritating he found much of it. Edward did not own a television set and never turned on his radio. (In an essay for this magazine, he once referred to the latter as "the wireless," a word I persuaded him to change.) During the years I knew him, he went only rarely to the movies, though he had gone much more when he was younger. As a boy he had been a baseball fan, and he had a complete knowledge of the sport up to the year 1930, when he lost interest.

Edward kept in touch with contemporary culture by reading the *New York Times*—whose ideological waffling never ceased either to inflame or to amuse him—and the large number of magazines that I saved for him. As I would drag a plastic supermarket bag or two filled with these magazines into his apartment, he could be depended on to say something on the order of: "Joseph, you are my dear friend, and it is always a great pleasure to see you, but when I look upon

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these wretched magazines you bring along, I realize that even the best of friendships has its cost." Once the catalogue of a southern university press was atop these magazines. "Oh, good," he said, "filled, I am sure, with announcements of biographies of Shoeless Jim Hopkins and other great southern politicians."

I was regularly astonished at how much Edward was able to get out of the magazines I brought him. Some magazines he read just to keep himself abreast, as he said, of the what the dogs were up to. He enjoyed my referring to the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* a dreary journal that reports on university life, as *Pravda,* by which I meant that, like the Russian paper under the Communists, everything, to hear the *Chronicle* tell it, was going just splendidly. Edward was too sensible to read much of what I brought him all the way through. But by efficient skimming, gleaning, reading first and last paragraphs, he always caught the chief point and quickly penetrated through the smoke of intellectual obfuscation to find the deep illogic or empty complaint at the heart of the writer's composition.

As a scholar and social philosopher, Edward taught Hegel and Hobbes, Tocqueville and Weber, and he wrote papers on nationalism and civil society, on the primordial and the traditional. But as an intellectual he was interested in the popularization of ideas. Although he didn't write often for the intellectual magazines, except for THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and in earlier years for *Encounter,* he liked to keep a hand in. He always knew who the passing figures were, and he was able astutely to gauge their quality. Of Camille Paglia, for example, he commented, "She is more intelligent than her beliefs." Not long after I first met Edward, he called Christopher Lasch "a good graduate student whose unconcentrated anger would never allow him to become much more than that." By way of placing someone at his own university, he said, "I fear he believes Richard Rorty is a deep thinker." I once heard him upbraid his son for taking a course at Northwestern University in which one of the books on the syllabus was David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest.* "That," said Edward, "is a book one reads in an airport." Hannah Arendt, Allan Bloom, Susan Sontag, the Frankfurt School, the New York intellectuals, Michel Foucault—in the matter of contemporary intellectuals and academic savants, Edward knew whom *not* to get excited about.

He could be deadly in his deflationary remarks. I enjoyed these stiletto thrusts greatly, not only because they were done with great economy and insight—of a troublemaking don at Cambridge, he once said to me that his speciality was inserting bullets in other men's guns—but because they had superior perspective behind them. The three large intellectual influences on his own life were the economist

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Frank Knight and the sociologist Robert Park, both of whom he encountered as a young man at the University of Chicago, and Max Weber, against whose work, I believe, Edward measured his own writing. Good though he knew it was, he nonetheless found, by this measure, his own writing wanting.

Among contemporary writers and scholars, Edward much admired V. S. Naipaul, Arnaldo Momigliano, Philip Larkin, Peter Brown, Owen Chadwick, Franco Venturi, Barbara Pym, E. H. Gombrich, and Elie Kedourie. He greatly respected Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Sidney Hook, and Hilton Kramer for their tenacity in doing battle with liars. He was death on intellectual fraudulence. But he attacked it less through his writings, which are not notable for personal attack, than in conversation. About a famous, still-living American sociologist who in his style and manner made pretense to being upper-class, Edward once remarked to me: "I'll say this about X. At least he never takes undue advantage of being Jewish." He one day told me that a New York intellectual had announced to him that, in Israeli politics, he was of the war party. "Yes," said Edward, with a nod and the peculiar set he could give to his jaw. "Israel will go to war and he'll go to the party."

Edward not only spoke his mind but could be very confrontational. At a dinner party, I once introduced him to the English journalist Henry Fairlie. "Mr. Fairlie, good to meet you," Edward said. "You wrote some brilliant things in the 1950s. [It was then, I should explain, the late 1970s.] Now, I understand you have become a socialist. Please explain yourself." Fairlie said that what had brought about his conversion was hearing Michael Harrington lecture in Chicago. "Michael Harrington in Chicago," said Edward, without smile or pause, "surely a case of worst comes to worst." Fairlie, pretty well lubricated by alcohol, went off, feeling no pain.

Edward could also be immensely courteous, holding back his true opinions, when he was fond of people in whose company he found himself. But in other surroundings he would say precisely what he thought. Since he held no received opinions whatsoever, this could often be dangerous. Someone at a party might express admiration for a particular novelist, which might cause Edward to ask that person—a married man or woman—if he or she then approved of adultery, since the novelist in question clearly did. Many of the icons of our day never came close to finding a place in his pantheon. He believed I. F. Stone's Stalinism shouldn't have been so quickly forgotten. He didn't consider Isaiah Berlin great, but merely charming, a man who often wanted courage because he was intellectually hostage to certain Oxford dons. The only contemporary American social scientists he

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spoke about with respect were James Q. Wilson and Edward Banfield, who he thought had retained the fundamental common sense that contemporary social science seemed able to extrude from most of its adherents. Such outspokenness made him many enemies, for his witty darts not only hit but often got back to their targets.

Edward founded, and for more than twenty-five years edited, the magazine *Minerva*, a review devoted to science, higher education, and policy. (He was also, along with his friend Leo Szilard, one of the presiding spirits of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.*) To say Edward edited *Minerva* is, however, to indulge in euphemism. He really wrote most of it, often under the names of living contributors, for his own high standards forced him into heavily editing if not actually rewriting the manuscripts he had accepted for publication.

I have seen some of his letters to *Minerva* contributors. One—which I do not have before me—was to a young left-wing woman in Canada, to whom Edward wrote that he was much impressed with the research in the article she had sent him. Then he added (I am paraphrasing from memory): "It is only the opinions expressed in the article that I despise. If you would agree to remove these opinions, I shall be pleased to publish your article. If you feel the article still in need of opinions, I shall of course be only too glad to supply my own." He told another contributor that he would agree to publish his article if he would remove its barbarous academic jargon. The man wrote back to say that he wouldn't at all mind removing the jargon, which was, he supposed, really a matter of taste. This caused Edward to shoot back a note saying, "Yes, it is only a matter of taste—good versus bad taste." "I take the leather whip to my contributors," he once said to me, "but it doesn't seem to matter. They have steel bottoms."

I appear to be Boswelling my friend Edward, but perhaps this is not inappropriate, because he often seemed to me very Johnsonian. Edward himself loved Samuel Johnson. He admired Johnson's gravity, a word that Edward himself frequently used to explain his regard for certain writers. Marguerite Yourcenar was one such writer. Theodore Dreiser was another. In Edward's view, Dreiser was a much greater writer than E. M. Forster, whom Edward knew when both were fellows at King's College, because his writing had greater gravity.

An engraving of John Opie's portrait of Johnson faced Edward's desk in his apartment in Chicago. Edward shared with Johnson that unteachable intellectual quality known as authority, a quality that in both men derived from their moral centeredness. Both knew where they stood, and the mere fact of their standing where they did made the ground beneath them firm. Like Johnson, Edward

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came into his authority young. In his book *The Torment of Secrecy*, written when he was in his middle forties, availing himself of this authority, he could persuade by the power of undeniable assertion.

Edward's apartment, on the ninth floor of a neo-Tudor skyscraper on Stony Island Avenue, had none of the squalor of Johnson's various abodes. Across from Jackson Park, in sight of the Museum of Science and Industry, with a spectacular view of Lake Michigan, it was roughly five blocks from his office in the Social Sciences Building at the University of Chicago. Its floors were covered with Oriental carpets, about which he knew a good deal; its walls, just about all of them, were lined with books, about which he knew everything. Eight-foot-high bookcases extending along the length of both sides of the front hall were the first things that struck one on entering this apartment. The living room was similarly lined with bookcases. The books were organized by subject matter: political philosophy in the hall; religion, European and ancient history in the living room. Reference works—the *OED*, the *Britannica* (eleventh edition), the *DNB*, and various specialized dictionaries—were in a bookcase opposite his desk and in a revolving bookcase alongside the desk. The dining-room table was generally at least half-covered with manuscripts, correspondence, and bills, which he tended to pay with a rhythm all his own.

Another hallway, this one leading to his bedroom, held books on India and things Asian. His bedroom was the place for literature. Here one found handsome sets of the great writers: Hazlitt, his beloved Dickens, Balzac, many French writers in Pleiade editions, all the Russians. By his bedside were the Christian mystics and wisdom writers. Social science was in the guest bedroom; a second desk and office (once meant to be a maid's room) contained books on higher education. Closets harbored back issues of *Horizon* and other journals. The kitchen and two of the three bathrooms were the only rooms devoid of bookcases, though the bathroom in which he bathed always had eight or ten books and a few magazines at the back ledge of the tub for him to read while soaking.

All the furniture was carefully chosen for its subdued elegance and feeling for tradition. In the living room, along with the Jacob Epstein bust of Conrad and the bust of Max Weber, was a self-portrait by Epstein; the few feet of wall space in this room not covered by bookcases were dominated by Piranesi prints. The coat closet in the hall contained two red fezzes, one for Edward and the other for his son, Adam, obtained in Egypt when Adam was a child of seven or eight. Another closet farther down the hall was set up as a wine cellar of sorts, with bottles of champagne, Jack Daniels, and various quite good wines; cigar boxes were on an enclosed shelf atop still more books.

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The kitchen was set up for a serious cook, which Edward was. A vast quantity of spices, teas, superior knives, and other rather elaborate kitchen technology lined the walls; a worktable was in the center of the room. Edward was a gourmand, someone who not only likes delicacies but plenty of them. Apart from books, Edward's other extravagance was for what Wallace Stevens, in a letter, called "fancy groceries." Unlike Stevens, Edward could fabricate elegant dishes as well as devour them.

I always thought of his cooking—a mélange of splendid Central European dishes—as Edwardo-Hapsburg. It was immensely rich and flavorful, with no bow in the direction of odious healthy eating; the word *cholesterol* never passed his lips. He made marvelous soups (rich minestrone, thick bean and barley, dark lentil and sausage), he often began meals with smoked salmon, and he provided fine main courses, notable among them an aubergine (never, by Edward, called eggplant) dish known as "the Imam swoons": whether he swooned at the wonderful taste or at the expense of the ingredients, Edward once explained, was not clear. Meals generally ended with refreshing fresh fruit salads. Until near the very end, he never permitted help from guests, either in the kitchen or in the matter of cleaning up.

The conversation at these meals was quite as rich as the food. Subjects I recall included the work of the KGB in England; the fate of books among the beetles and in the steamy climate of India; the great bookstores of Philadelphia in the early decades of this century; mad old Trotskyists; and great scholars and their eccentricities. At table, talking about the splendors of the old British postal system, he once told about a letter from India addressed "Edward Shils, Sociologist, England" that was actually delivered to him. The last large meal in company I had at Edward's was prepared not by him but by his friend and neighbor in Cambridge, Thomas Moffett, who had retired as a butler at Peterhouse, where Edward was an honorary fellow, and who had come to Chicago to care for Edward in his illness. Everyone at that dinner told a story about crème brûlée, which was our dessert. All I could contribute was that a sympathetic reviewer of one of my books compared my prose to crème brûlée, saying it was very rich stuff, but you don't want to take too much of it in one sitting.

On the matter of food, as on that of books and friendship, Edward exercised very little restraint. I often took him shopping. Edward did not drive a car (nor did he type or use a computer) but he knew all the city's streets and the best places to buy the finest things. As a man who knew all the major cities of the world—he was always a great walker—he would gently mock Chicago for its crudity, but, clearly, he also loved the city.

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We generally began north at the Paulina Market, easily the best butcher shop in the city, an establishment that would cause a vegetarian to faint, with its more than fifteen-yard-long display cases of loins and links, steaks and chops, meats smoked and cured. It is run by a third generation of German working-class men, chiefly from the surrounding neighborhood. Many of its butchers knew Edward and called him "Professor." Professor was what he was called, too, at the N & G Produce Market, where he would pick among the vegetables and fruits, always paying his bill by check, and where he had talked the owner's son out of becoming a dental technician and into staying in the family business. We would cross the street to buy olive oil and cheese. Occasionally we would have lunch, always upstairs, at the Greek Islands on Halsted, where Edward was greeted as "Perfetcher" by the sons of the original owners, whom he also knew. Sometimes we would stop on Taylor Street for an Italian ice, which we ate in the car as we watched the passing parade of young Mexicans, Italians, and blacks. On the way back south, we would stop at Bruno's, the Lithuanian bakery, where Edward would buy the weighty and coarse-textured rye bread he favored.

Edward admired few things more than shopkeepers. He was impressed by their courage in staking everything on their small businesses. A beautiful shop, locally owned, such as the Italian ceramics shop Tutti Italia that was in my own neighborhood, set him vibrating every time we entered it together. Along with making a point of telling its young owner how elegantly everything was set out, he always bought an item or two. He once told me that he judged any city by the number of interesting blocks of shops it provided. London and Paris were the hands-down winners here.

Edward also admired working men and women. He once surprised me by telling me how large the sum was that he contributed to the staff of janitors, doormen, and receiving-room clerks in his building. He had himself been pleased, many years before, at having been mistaken by another tenant in his building, an older woman, for "the city engineer." What pleased him was being taken for an honest working man of great competence, for he much valued competence wherever he came upon it. In this, as in other ways—his intellectual fearlessness as well as his physique—he resembled H. L. Mencken, who wrote: "Competence, indeed, was my chief admiration, then as now, and next to competence I put what is called being a good soldier—that is, not whining."

Edward took particular interest in Chicago's ethnic character. He enjoyed the ethnic carnival, which meant not only ethnic differences but generalizations about those differences. He was certainly not to

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be stopped in this mild pleasure by contemporary political correctness. (Besides, he truly judged people on their merits and so had no need to worry about being thought prejudiced.) He loved such comic ethnic distinctions as: the difference between a Hungarian and a Romanian was that both would sell you their grandmothers but the Romanian wouldn't deliver. Like Mencken again, he didn't mind calling a Krauto-American a Krauto-American. He had great regard for the Poles, Lithuanians, and other Eastern Europeans who had settled in Chicago, and he much respected the tidiness with which they kept their houses and lawns. He thought that the blacks had been sold a very sad bill of goods that allowed them to believe in their own victimhood. He was particularly hard on his own, the Jews; and on pretentious Jewish intellectuals he was hardest of all.

Edward's once great respect for intellectuals and academics had dwindled considerably after the 1960s. More and more he tended to think of academics and intellectuals as essentially quacks pushing untested ideas at no personal risk. For those true scholars—Arnaldo Momigliano, Gershom Scholem, Peter Brown, Paul Oskar Kristeller, Jacques Barzun—Edward had great regard. But for those to whom the least fraudulence adhered—names on request—he was merciless in his criticism. He frequently reverted to the Yiddish words *chachem* and *chachema*, meaning greatly learned wise man or woman, always used sarcastically, to refer to the false wise men and women of our day. His list of the false contemporary *chachemin* would put the lights out in several major universities.

He once told me that, had he the chance of beginning life again, he might choose a career in the military. I know he much enjoyed his years during World War II, when he was seconded to the British army to interrogate captured German soldiers. I, for one, am glad he was a teacher. A life in the military might not have given him the opportunity to stock his mind as richly as he was able to stock it as a university professor. The best, though still poor, analogy I can come up with for Edward's mind is that of the magician's glass, out of which the magician takes hardy swallow after hardy swallow. When the glass is set down, *mirabile dictu*, it turns out to be still full to the brim. It seemed there was nothing Edward did not know, nothing he ever forgot: until the very last, I never knew him to stumble in his memory of a name or title of a book. Vast quantities of literature, history, philosophy, anecdotes, jokes—all were neatly filed away in his mind, which also contained a mental Rolodex that began around the year 1000 B.C. with, so far as I could determine, no names missing.

I make Edward sound a walking *vade mecum*, which, true enough, in part he was. But none of this would have been of the least interest

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if he hadn't had a mind capable of great powers of penetration and formulation. He amply demonstrated this on serious subjects—nationalism, civil society, tradition, collective consciousness—in his books. But his conversation glittered with his rich verbal gifts; his vocabulary was, for me, a continuous delight, full of surprising twists and turns. (He was endlessly curious about the etymology of phrases and idioms.) He might call a man "an ignorant zealot," not a phrase much used in our century. Scruffy neighborhood kids playing with untied gym shoes and baseball hats on backwards he might refer to as our *jeunesse dorée.* I once described an acquaintance of ours to him as rat-faced. "Yes," said Edward, "now that you mention it, he is rather rodential." *Rodential*—who else but Edward would have thought of such a word, which sounds like an insurance company for mice.

His metaphor-making powers were dazzling. Sometimes these could take an oddly—for so urban a man—rural character, as when, in one of his books, he described congressmen as "fidgety as a hen atop a nest of woodpeckers." He used to refer to his friend Melvin Lasky, whose editing of *Encounter* he much respected and whom he frequently attempted to advise, "as a dog who knows seven languages and obeys in none." More often, his metaphors were brilliant in their ornateness. He likened the condition of his French to a set of crystal in a glass cabinet after a bombing raid on London in 1943 (which didn't stop him from reading sixteen volumes of Tocqueville's letters in fewer than three weeks).

Once, at a meeting of the Editorial Board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, on which Edward sat for eighteen years, one of the members questioned the function of the board. She wondered if it wasn't, in her words, "just window dressing." "Allow me," Edward began, "to take up Mrs. Trilling's fenestral metaphor. One has a window. One acquires a shade for it. Curtains. Perhaps a cornice. Possibly venetian blinds. Drapes may be in order. I suppose all that is window dressing. Yes, we, his Editorial Board, are, in some sense, Mr. Epstein's window to a wider outlook on the world. But you know, just because one has a window, that doesn't mean that one wants to look out of it all the time. Mr. Epstein doesn't, after all, have to refer to us, his Editorial Board, ceaselessly." That, I should say, is worthy of Henry James.

The flow of wit in Edward was unsurpassed by anyone I expect ever to meet. A rather pretentious Czech friend once told me that, in the old days, before the advent of the Communists, his father, a high bourgeois, never shaved himself. "More likely the truth is," said Edward, when I reported this to him, "his father shaved his mother." When the University of Chicago had a rather embarrassing faculty member who had years before gained tenure, Edward suggested to

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Robert Hutchins that the university acquire a bungalow in Gary, Indiana, and make this man dean of the University of Chicago at Gary, with no students and no responsibilities whatsoever. I called him in the midst of his preparing an elaborate dinner for an important figure at the University of Chicago, about which he commented: "I don't know why I bother. If he really cared about good food, he would surely have left his wife years ago." He once described a certain intellectual to me as "a rabid anti-Communist"; then, after a perfectly timed pause, he added, "Wait a minute—so am I."

Edward was very generous about my own attempts at wit, and he frequently improved on them. The University of Illinois at Chicago was for many years known as Circle Campus, sometimes called Circle, and I took to calling it Vicious Circle. Edward thought this quite amusing, though he turned up the joke a full notch by referring to the school as Old Vish. In company, he was always asking me to tell my jokes, and I would learn that, behind my back, he was telling a few of them himself and was giving me credit for having invented them.

Being with Edward was endlessly amusing. Once he arranged for me to be invited to a formal dinner at the University of Chicago in honor of his friend John Sparrow, then the Warden of All Souls College, Oxford. At the time, I did not own a tuxedo, and Edward's "soup and fish," as he jokingly called his dinner clothes, were in Cambridge. I told him I would acquire two tuxedos from a place that rented them. "Very well, Joseph," he said, "but something simple, you know—no rock 'n' roll, no pimpery." When I explained to the man at the tuxedo rental shop what was wanted—two simple sets of black dinner clothes, shawl collars, shirts, and cummerbunds—he said, "No problem" and then proceeded to call his downtown office and ask for "two Tony Martins." At drinks, before the dinner itself, Edward slipped up behind me and whispered in my ear, "Joseph, comforting, is it not, to know one is wearing one's own socks."

Edward was, as I noted earlier, a man on whom nothing was lost, and the subtlety of his observations seems to me often astonishing. "He is a man who often laughs but in between seldom smiles," he once said to me of Saul Bellow. He admired the economists of the University of Chicago, trained under Jacob Viner and Frank Knight; and he had spent more than half a century in the company of Milton Friedman and George Stigler and found both to be men of superior intelligence. But he felt that the Chicago economists, brilliant though they could be, were insufficiently impressed with the mysteries of life. It was these mysteries—the role of the primordial, the part tradition plays—that most stirred him, and he struggled with the questions that they posed till the very end of his own life. "Take me home, Joseph,"

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he said to me, rather wearily one night as we were departing the Hong Minh restaurant on Twenty-second Street in Chicago's Chinatown. "I need to return to my desk to invent more stories about how society is organized."

Edward made it a point to introduce me to anyone he found interesting or charming. Many of these people I met at dinners he had prepared, and a vast number of them were Europeans: Leszek Kolakowski, Erica Reiner (the editor of the Assyrian dictionary at the Oriental Institute), the grandson of Theodor Mommsen, Hugh Lloyd-Jones, who was then the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. But on November 12, 1976, according to my journal, he invited me over to meet Arnaldo Momigliano. "One of the most charming men I have ever met," reads my journal entry of the next day. "Small, muffled in what seemed like many layers of clothes, peeping out at the world from behind glasses of plate-glass thickness, he proved a man of wit and of sweet humor and of great intellectual power; and along with all this, an absolute thesaurus of information. He is, as he remarked of himself, very much a Piedmontese. A lovely accent [it resembled Bela Lugosi playing Dracula], many fine gestures with his hands, a rumpled appearance, a penetrating mind—all combine in a personage at once formidable and adorable. Edward noted me gazing at him in admiration. We looked at each other, Edward and I, and smiled."

Arnaldo Momigliano was, in the truest sense, Edward's only peer. Arnaldo, who had been forced into exile by the Italian Fascists, found an intellectual home in England. He and Edward shared the international spirit in scholarship and in life. He was the only man who seemed to know as much as Edward, though Edward always advertised Arnaldo as knowing much more. Neither, in my presence, ever called the other by his first name. Edward referred to Arnaldo as Professor Momigliano, and Arnaldo, in the European manner, often referred to Edward as Shils.

Twice a year we traveled to AMERICAN SCHOLAR Editorial Board meetings as a threesome. Walking through O'Hare and LaGuardia—Edward with his walking stick, Arnaldo with his crushed Borsalino hat—I always felt that we resembled the intellectual equivalent of the Marx Brothers, with me as Zeppo, far and away the dimmest of the lot. Edward looked after Arnaldo, who was less confident of his way and who had to be frisked at airport security because he wore a pacemaker. Arnaldo had various airplane tickets, newspaper clippings, and foreign letters pinned to him or sticking out of his pockets. He always carried what looked to be roughly three pounds of keys—I do not exaggerate—to various apartments, offices, and library carrels

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around the world. Such a disorderly exterior, such an orderly mind.

A certain amount of Arnaldo's and Edward's conversation, having to do with such (to me) arcana as founders of Romanian folklore or classicists in the Soviet Union, floated amiably above my head. Usually, though, I found it most amusing. I remember one conversation about a student whom Edward and Arnaldo agreed was altogether too good-looking ever to become a true scholar—they were perfectly serious about this. When one of Arnaldo's best students left the University of Chicago for Princeton, both he and Edward were disappointed, and Arnaldo said, wistfully, "Ah, a Jewish boy, the Ivy League beckons, what do you expect?"

Edward had brought Arnaldo to the University of Chicago as something like a permanent visiting professor and argued for his remaining there when the administration, failing to be properly impressed with his greatness, wanted to release him at normal retirement age. Edward took personal responsibility for him. When Arnaldo's bad heart condition worsened, Edward, the Jewish grandmother in him kicking in, moved Arnaldo out of the room he occupied at the faculty club and into his own more capacious apartment. There, with an oxygen tank in his room, Arnaldo continued to see his students until he returned to England, alas, to die. Edward cooked for him and did his laundry and looked after all his needs. I recall Glen Bowersock, a dear friend of Arnaldo's, saying that he had never seen anything quite like the way Edward looked after Arnaldo—usually a lesser man might look after a greater, but here was one great man extending himself completely for another.

Had things worked out the other way round, I am fairly sure that Arnaldo would not have done the same for Edward. I say this not in the least to disparage Arnaldo but to highlight the extraordinary generosity of which Edward was capable. Through the son of a friend who had been a student at Cambridge, where Edward kept a small house on Tennis Court Road near his college, Peterhouse, I recently learned that Edward was thought a tightwad. This came from his sometimes taking leftover desserts home from college lunches and serving them for dinner at his own table. At the Greek Islands Restaurant, he used to have the waiters put the extra lemons and unused bread into a bag that he would take home. But these were habits of Edward's Depression-era mentality—he simply hating seeing food go to waste.

At the same time that he would take home bread and lemons, he would give—not loan, *give*—a graduate student ten thousand dollars to help her finish a difficult final year of her studies. He might give another young couple a five-thousand-dollar Christmas gift, merely

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because he wanted them to know he loved them. He was immensely generous to his own son and daughter-in-law and, had they permitted it, would have done even more for them.

Edward was even more generous with his time. He would see students at all hours. He would take them to restaurants. He lavished great care—and vast quantities of his green ink (Mr. Alfred's [Dunhill] Ink for Writing Instruments)—on the papers they wrote for his classes. He was sometimes contemptuous of how little his colleagues seemed to do by way of imposing standards on their graduate students' dissertations. If you wrote a dissertation under Edward, you were sent to the south of England, thence to Sumatra and back, but when you were done, you really knew everything about your subject. Many a student must have left his apartment, heart weighted down with a list of another thirty tomes he would have to plough through and head spinning from having discovered that, to take the next logical step in his studies, he would have to learn Polish. But, if the student was fundamentally sound, he would know that what Edward had asked him to do was right.

Edward's effect on me was inevitably to make intellectual effort seem worthwhile. He was like a great ship captain in Conrad, not standing at the helm, but seated at his desk at all hours, working through the problems he had set himself as a young man and felt he had not exhausted. He was a man who seemed to get by with four or five hours of sleep. One might drop him off at ten at night, and he would get in another three hours at his desk: making corrections on student papers, perhaps working on the ninth draft of an essay, dictating letters, or writing lengthy testimonials for students and friends for jobs, grants, and further schooling.

A testimonial from Edward could be a dangerous thing. The problem was that Edward not only had standards, which are easy enough to possess, but he applied them, which is not so easy. He might praise a student, or a former student now in his forties or fifties, for honorableness, upstandingness, and industry but not for being deeper than Goethe, more brilliant than Stendhal, or subtler than Proust, and the absence of these qualities could be dampening in the current inflationary academic testimonial market. At the same time, a recent student of his told me that Edward had written him a brilliant many-paged testimonial showing how his, the student's, own work made him a perfect fit historically for the sociology department to which he had applied. Edward knew the history of this department, I have no doubt, better than anyone currently in it.

As Henry James could never lie about art, so Edward could never lie about intellect. His high standards caused him truly to anguish

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over the state into which the universities, and intellectual life generally, seemed to him to have fallen. He, who perhaps knew more about the history of scholarship than anyone living, looked about him and everywhere saw compromise, dumbing down, politicization. (Anyone who thinks that the attacks on the politicization of academic life are themselves at base political ought to look into *The Torment of Secrecy*, Edward's book of 1956, written during the heart of the congressional investigation of security in the United States, to see an example of majestic disinterested political thought in action. In the pages of that book, Edward, without underplaying the genuine menace of the Soviet Union, shows why McCarthy and other vastly opportunistic congressmen were able, through menacing work of their own, to stir up the country.) The great university traditions that he so much admired—had really devoted his life to carrying on—were everywhere, in his view, being worn away, undermined, all but sabotaged.

His anguish often turned into rage. I have been personal witness to some of his spectacular tirades on the subject of the swinish behavior of academics. Edward was one of the world's fastest talkers, and I have heard tirades of his that lasted no less than an uninterrupted half hour. This made for a vast number of well-chosen words from a master of vituperation. His anger at what he saw before him gave him the reputation of a curmudgeon, when in fact he was a man driven to the deepest sadness by the spoilage of all that he most loved in the world.

Edward's position as a strong figure who disapproved of so much that was now de rigueur in academic and intellectual life tended, even within the University of Chicago, to set him on the margin of things. He continued to teach at the university, without payment of any kind, until only two months before his death at the age of eighty-four, but his counsel was only rarely sought on any matter of important university policy, which hurt him greatly, though he never made this complaint out loud, at least not to me.

While Edward Levi was president of the University of Chicago, Edward was something akin to the cardinal he dreamed Jacques Maritain had made him. He was not a gray but a purple eminence; he was a powerful and not at all behind-the-scenes influence, whose advice was sought and very often followed. In good part it was owing to the two Edwards—Levi and Shils—that the University of Chicago did not knuckle under to student protest in the middle 1960s and was never humiliated and, subsequently, diminished by it in the way that Berkeley, Columbia, Michigan, and other universities had been.

The degradation of the great academic traditions was not something with which Edward could ever come to terms. He functioned as

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something of a conscience in these matters, but the truth is that people don't feel the need of such a conscience, least of all those who are flourishing quite nicely without this important, invisible organ of the spirit.

Courage has its price, though Edward would have dismissed the notion that he was ever genuinely courageous. When he gave the Jefferson Lecture in 1979, he chose as his subject the regrettable incursions of the federal government into higher education. People afterwards told him that it had taken courage to say what he thought. Not at all, he responded; it takes courage in the Soviet Union or in South Africa to say what one thinks, not in the United States.

The price of Edward's courage was loneliness. He was not only excluded from the inner councils at the University of Chicago, but he was invited out less and less. He maintained some friendships at the university, but increasingly his life was spent among students and a few friends not in positions of any power. His many English and European friendships bucked up his spirits. He used to say that, if his son and three or four friends didn't live in Chicago, he would have retired permanently to England.

Luckily for me, he never did. His friendship and wisdom meant a very great deal to me. I used to check in with him regularly on subjects about which I was writing and found him unfailingly helpful. He once told me that, without the element of personal intellectual progress, life was pretty empty, a notion especially useful for anyone who teaches and hence is tempted to repeat himself endlessly. Another time he recited for me the four intellectual possibilities: to be unoriginal but right; to be original but wrong; to be unoriginal and wrong (the most common possibility); and, rarest of all, of course, to be original and right. He always asked me what I was reading; and I could not mistake the slight disappointment in his voice when I reported reading at length a writer who he thought not really worth the time: the last such, to give an idea of Edward's standard, was Elizabeth Bishop.

If I have made Edward out to be lonely—without the large family life he would have enjoyed, with a vastly attenuated connection to the university where he had taught for more than fifty years—I don't want to make him sound tragic. His curiosity was too wide, his mind too lively for him ever to seem a broken reed. He knew how to take pleasure from the everyday delights life provided: good food, good books, good friends. "Through all my days I have never known more than momentary boredom," he once told me. With his mind, boredom was not really a possibility.

Edward never degraded the material life. Up to the very end, he

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remained an enthusiastic collector of books. He would go into Williams-Sonoma to buy some kitchen *tsotchke*, knowing full well he needed it, as he said, like a *loch in kop*. He claimed that acquiring new things gave one a sense of futurity, of life continuing, no matter what one's age. His own age, once he reached his middle seventies and beyond, became a standing joke with him. "As the United States seems to have passed, as Bryce remarked, from barbarism to decadence without attaining civilization," he once told me, "so I seem to have gone from ignorance to wisdom without ever having been considered very intelligent." Once, when two former students of his from the 1930s came to visit him, men now in their seventies, he capped his report of their visit by saying to me, with his winning smile, "Nice boys."

Edward had extraordinary physical gifts. He could keep later hours, eat more and spicier food, talk longer, and get up the next day in much better fettle than I or just about anyone else I knew. His energy remained amazing until his illness. I always thought he would die in England of a heart attack. I thought I would receive a call, and a voice in a gentle English accent would tell me that Edward had died in his sleep or, better, at his desk. "I want to go with my boots on," he told me more than once. "No tubes up my nose, lashed to three IVs, strangers milling about."

What he died of was cancer: colon cancer metastasized to the liver. (He might have said, like the archbishop in Willa Cather's novel, "I shall die of having lived.") Although he was eighty-three when the cancer was discovered, he enrolled himself for the full-blast regimen of chemotherapy. After the first rounds proved ineffective, he signed up for a second, this time experimental, round. When people who knew what he was going through asked how he was, he replied, "Apart from dying of cancer, I feel just fine." He was only intermittently in great pain, but chemotherapy can be to cancer what psychoanalysis often is to neurosis: the illness, as Karl Kraus said, for which it purports to be the cure.

Edward must have lost fifty pounds, his eyes stared out of his head, he began to shuffle, he looked particularly fragile from behind. Whereas before the intrusion of cancer, Edward, for the twenty-odd years I knew him, seemed a permanent age sixty, he now looked all of his eighty-four years and more. Among the other penalties exacted by cancer—by the chemotherapy, really—was that he lost his sense of taste. He told me that he would fantasize about dishes, then order them or prepare them himself, only to find most of them tasteless. One day I brought, at his request, a jar of spinach borscht called schav, which he ate with great dollops of sour cream. "I don't know how much longer I'll be alive," he said to me, "but however long it

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might be, I shall never eat this horrible soup again." Our last meal together, before he took to his bed, was a cold smoked pheasant followed by a special brand of chocolate ice cream, each of us eating the latter out of separate pint-sized containers.

Edward told me that he felt he had, over the years, acquired the character to face death without terror. And so he did, little as he wished to leave life. Except for only occasional lapses into delirium, he kept his lucidity to the end. The extreme weight loss caused the very shape of his face to change. His nose, which was normally fleshy at the end, now came to seem longish and slightly aquiline, which made him look like a very distinguished Roman senator. To me his face always suggested great playfulness, and I have seen him in a state of intellectual passion, after a day of solid work at his desk, when he seemed to me nothing less than radiant. But he never seemed more beautiful than at the end of his life. Until the end, he continued to see students. Old friends, my wife among them, came in a week or so before his death to bid him good-bye. As my wife said, he did all the work: telling her how much her friendship had meant to him, how he would miss her, instructing her not to grieve for him but to remember the lovely times they had had together. I had taken to kissing his forehead when I came into or departed his bedroom. He would lift my hand to his mouth and smile.

Four or so weeks before he died, I told him that he had been a very good friend, the best friend I expected ever to have. He told me that I had been a dear friend to him as well and added the qualification: "even though we rarely spoke together of things of the heart." I tried not to show shock at this, and I have since pondered its meaning.

We shared a happy intellectual candor, as only two people whose general views are congruent can. From early in our friendship, we told one another the amount of fees we collected for lectures and for magazine pieces or what we paid for this or that article of clothing or meal. I felt there was nothing I could not say to him about other people, we could even analyze the personalities of persons we both admired, and, such was his tact, I never had to tell him that anything I said was *entre nous*—he could make those delicate judgments nicely enough on his own. Our loyalty to each other was complete. And yet, at the end, Edward felt that "we rarely spoke of things of the heart." What did he mean?

What he meant, I have come to believe, was that we chose not to speak to each other, except in the most fleeting way, of our doubts and disappointments and griefs. We didn't, in part because neither of us was therapeutic in our impulses—better, we both felt, to eat than to spill the beans—and in part because we each lived by a code in

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which a man does not whine or weep, even on the shoulder of his dearest friend.

Edward applied his own high standards to himself, and if he found so many contemporaries wanting, he knew that, as good as he was, he was not as good as he wanted to be. He left unfinished vastly ambitious manuscripts; and as excellent as his published work was, he always felt it could have been better. In his intellectual life, Edward suffered what I used to think of as encyclopedism: he wished to get all around every subject he took up. This could make him sometimes garrulous in conversation and cause him to bring in manuscripts forty or fifty pages longer than the possible outer limits of the space available. He was immensely tolerant of my editing of his manuscripts, which chiefly entailed radical cutting, and he used to joke about bringing out a book consisting entirely of things that I had cut from his essays. (I gave the book the working title *From the Abattoir Floor.*) Powerful as so much of his writing is, and permanent though I believe his contribution to the study of society has been, he would, I do not doubt, have preferred to have left behind a single masterwork. But, alas, he didn't. It was not something we talked about.

He hungered, too, for a richer family life than he had. He loved the *idea* of Christmas, for example, though he didn't do much about it; and his notions here may have derived as much from Dickens as from the sad reality of the rather hopeless binge of gift giving that this holiday has become. By the time I knew him, Edward had long been divorced, though he had had chief responsibility for raising his only child. In all the time I knew him, he never told me that he had been married twice, and I only learned this from an enemy of his who told it to me to spite him. Yet, such are the paradoxes in the human heart that, despite his love of family, Edward may have been one of nature's true bachelors, with his frequent travel to international conferences, his penchant for working at all hours, and his domestic schedule open to invasion by students, visiting scholars, and old friends.

Along with his hunger for family, Edward had a genuine regard for religion. He once described himself to a devout Catholic acquaintance as a "pious agnostic." He just couldn't make the leap into faith. I don't think this was by any means the central drama in his life. Faithfulness to his own exacting standards provided that. But he believed in religion, as he believed in family, because he thought both enhanced society by strengthening its bonds, preserving its traditions, making it deeper and richer. We spoke often of these things, Edward and I, but usually in a detached rather than a personal way.

Any but a fatuous man will be disappointed by his own life—will

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feel that he could have done more and better than he did. The truer test is whether a man has disappointed others. An entry from my journal of April 13, 1973, very soon after I first met Edward, reads:

> Dinner last evening with Edward Shils. Always a pleasure: very good food, even better talk, and a lovely overall feeling of intellectual glow that lasts for hours afterward. What an impressive figure he is, by turns serious, severe, wildly humorous, marvelously anecdotal, and above all disinterested. While on the one hand he seems unconnable, on the other he can be—and often is—a great appreciator.

When Edward was in Chicago, we spoke over the phone every day, usually for forty minutes or longer. In twenty-two years, we never ran out of things to say. My problem now is that I still have so many things to tell him. I remember wanting to call him to laugh together about the story in the *New York Times* about Tip O'Neill's pals in North Cambridge—Skippy McCaffrey, Pinky Sullivan, and Mickey O'Neil—who met to remember their friend Tip at their favorite bar, a story Edward would have loved. I wanted to call him to tell him the joke I heard about Yeshiva University's rowing team, on which one man rows and the other twelve yell. For the remainder of my life I shall have stories that I shan't be able to tell to Edward, and this will make them less satisfying.

Edward taught me how best to peel an orange, where to buy olive oil, how to spot intellectual fraudulence, and how to laugh in dark times. Since his death, a word, a phrase, a formulation will occur to me that has his own lovely comic spin on it, and I know that it is Edward speaking through me, as he so often did in life. Edward's life was devoted to the fundamental, the primordial truths we all know and are ever in danger of forgetting. Chief among them is that only a life lived with courage, passion, and honor is worth living. This was, precisely, the life Edward lived, indomitably, right up to the very end.

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Cornflakes

DAVID N. MOOLTEN

One morning as a man's wife offers to fill
His empty bowl he feels suddenly desolate
For how plain he has become, his life
Reduced to dry flecks of what once rustled
As willowy stalks along a country road
And not as vacuum-packed contents that settle
Just getting here. In the split-second sun
That ricochets through the blinds from deep
Within the finish of a neighbor's car
Pulling out he finds himself blindly struck
With other lives he could have led
More succulent than the strawberry held
Between his thumb and knife. Instead of a wife
Who uses words like "honey" as mere condiments,
He sees sad and mysterious women move
At great distances through which he longs:
The kind glanced from a hilltop swimming naked
In a pond, or bracing their gowns as they climb
From limousines. Their every motion draws him east
Across cornfields and oceans to the outskirts
Of foreign capitals. He might spend the night
With one and never stop wooing her
Even as they breakfast atop a balcony overrun
With vines of blooming jasmine. But when the stars
And glitter of the city begin to fade
And beg for transience he would race away
In his own slick car, combing the boulevards, never
Out of gas, thriving on the fumes of possibility . . .
One time quite by accident, while puttering
From Eighth onto Maple, he sized up his own wife
Walking home from the bakery. But before
He recognized her he felt the same wistful pangs

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Of obsession for not knowing her
As for any woman, and now he thinks
Of what it might mean if she became a stranger,
If he were, say, drifting through this city
He didn't know and brushed against her somewhere
After first watching her move at a great distance.
She would become a tall blonde with a hidden past
And in the morning he would stare at her in wonder
Trying to think of words for how truly amazing
It is to wake beside a woman. In the cupboard
Of her place would stand this box of cornflakes
She would take down, smiling as she poured them
So sweetly, as if she held his life in her hands.

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MUSIC

The Other Wittgenstein

J. F. PENROSE

...after the first few moments of wondering how the devil he accomplished it, one almost forgot that one was listening to a player whose right sleeve hung empty at his side. . . .

Lawrence Gilman
New York Herald Tribune
November 18, 1934

In the early months of the First World War, the 6th Dragoons of the Austrian army advanced into Russian Poland and there engaged Czarist forces. A young Viennese officer, a pianist who had made his concert debut only the previous year and who was a pupil of the renowned Theodor Leschetizky, was severely wounded and captured. In an exchange of prisoners the following year, the officer, or at least most of him, returned to Vienna. While the missing part of the officer, a right arm, remained in Russian territory, its extirpation was directly responsible for the creation of some of the more unusual music of the twentieth century.

At the time, the loss of the arm did not appear especially propitious. "I cannot help thinking of poor Paul the whole time," reads a diary entry of the officer's philosopher brother, then employed as a searchlight operator on a canal boat, "so suddenly deprived of his occupation! How terrible! What philosophy would it take to get over that! If only there is some solution other than suicide."

The officer, who eventually expired in 1961 of natural causes in Manhasset, New York, did not elect the philosophical solution. Instead, he arranged to be sent back to the front lines in Italy as an aide-de-camp to the general staff. He also learned to box one-handed. Not allowing the triviality of a missing right arm to interrupt his career, he then relearned to play the piano with his remaining hand. And, on finding the predictable dearth of concert works for one-armed pianists, he assured his place in musical history by commissioning more than forty works for the left hand alone. "The art of left-hand pianoforte writing is of great aesthetic interest," said that perpetually acute scholar, Donald Francis Tovey, "its special restrictions are a stimulus to the composer's invention." Ravel, Richard Strauss, Prokofiev, and Benjamin Britten agreed: they were among the prominent twentieth-century composers to have written for that remarkable pianist, the one-armed Paul Wittgenstein.

For a life and career so colorful as to appear almost scripted (indeed, it served as the basis for an overheated romance called *The Crown Prince*), it is altogether in keeping with the times that Wittgenstein's accomplishments have so rapidly attained their present obscurity. He hasn't been completely forgotten, though: Ravel and Prokofiev's biographers remember Wittgenstein with enmity for his complicated dealings with their subjects. As is perhaps understandable in one who had un-

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dergone such extraordinary personal and musical ordeals, Wittgenstein held pronounced views on what he expected from a commissioned work. Feeling that he (more than anyone) understood the capabilities and limitations of the left hand, Wittgenstein saw himself as an artistic collaborator to the composer. He considered that his bespoken works should reflect a compromise between the performer's requirements and the composer's inspiration—with deadlocks not necessarily going to the composer. This view, however, was passé even before Wittgenstein's time and over the years provoked sundry amounts of hurt, trepidation, annoyance, and, not surprisingly, outrage. Prokofiev put it succinctly when he wrote to Wittgenstein during the composition of the B-flat Concerto, "Vous êtes un musicien du XIX siècle, moi—du XX-e." "Thank you very much for your work," Wittgenstein replied, "I do not understand a note of it and I shall not play it."

Before Wittgenstein embarked upon his extensive commissioning program, works for the left hand, while surprisingly numerous, were somewhat limited in scope. The training of the left hand was closely linked to the development of virtuosity in the nineteenth century, and its role in the pianist's technical armory provoked much of the writing for the left hand: exercises and études. Wittgenstein had different requirements, however. The music that he commissioned, while complex, was not intended for technical display or pedagogical purposes but to permit him to continue the life of a concert pianist. Wittgenstein reasoned that his career would not flourish if he were only to play practice pieces. Success would depend on the artistic merit of the works he played. He was correct: the continued popularity of compositions such as Ravel's D major Concerto and the recent exhumation and rehabilitation of Wittgenstein-inspired works by present-day pianists such as Gary Graffman and Leon Fleisher all bear witness to the large and beneficial effect that Paul Wittgenstein has had on twentieth-century music.

"They all seemed to act with one another as if they were at court," said Johannes Brahms about the Wittgensteins. Brahms had reason to know: along with Clara Schumann, Gustav Mahler, and Richard Strauss, Brahms regularly visited the family at their immense three-story pile on the Alleegasse in Vienna (known as the *palais Wittgenstein*) in which there were scattered some seven grand pianos. Karl Wittgenstein who, as the *österreichische Eisenkönig,* amassed a vast fortune as the prime mover of the Austrian steel industry, presided over his wife and eight children in resplendently autocratic style. Karl himself was one of eleven children brought up in the Laxenburg palace near Vienna. His own father, Hermann, helped raise the young genius-violinist Joseph Joachim and introduced him to Mendelssohn.

By all accounts, the atmosphere in the Alleegasse was extraordinary, with its "all-pervading atmosphere of humanity and culture," as the conductor Bruno Walter put it. Musical standards, like everything else in the *palais,* were set by the imperious Karl. In his adolescence, the future steel magnate supported himself by playing the violin in a Manhattan restaurant after running away from Hermann, himself no slouch in the martinet department. Thirty years later, as the Austrian counterpart of Carnegie and Krupp, Wittgenstein had become a great patron of the arts. Walter, Schoenberg, Casals, Klimt, and Rodin were all aided by Wittgenstein funds. Karl's wife, Leopoldine—known as "Poldy"—seemed to have two functions in life when not ignoring her children: playing the piano and planning the Alleegasse *musicales,* which were attended by upward of three hundred guests and which featured many of the greatest musicians of the time. Poldy was also a friend and patron of the blind composer Josef Labor, who was to have considerable influence on her son's career.

Paul Carl Herman Wittgenstein was born in Vienna on November 5, 1887, the seventh of the eight Wittgenstein children who survived to maturity. Paul was preceded by his three brothers and three sisters and followed by the most famous member of the family, Ludwig. By ten, Paul was good enough at the piano to study with Malvine Brée, a noted Viennese teacher, and occasionally was permitted to accompany his august uncle Joachim. Like the older children, Paul and Ludwig were tutored at home until Paul was sent to a gymnasium in Wiener Neustadt and Ludwig to the K.u.k. Realschule in Linz, where he had the dubious distinction of being able to claim Adolf Hitler as a schoolmate.

The Wittgenstein children were profoundly musical, the three oldest brothers, Hans,

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Rudolph, and Kurt, showing exceptional promise. The sisters studied piano with Clara Schumann, wife to Robert, early supporter of Brahms and herself one of the great virtuosi of the age. Despite his own musicianship, their father remained the consummate patron, always keeping his distance from the mere performer. His artistic instincts were consistent with his inherited taste for absolute authority over his children; one by one, Karl forced his older sons away from the arts and into business careers, and one by one the three sons killed themselves.

More fortunate than his brothers, Paul's knack of overcoming seemingly insuperable obstacles, one of the rewards of the onerous job of growing up a Wittgenstein, was tested early. Karl Wittgenstein wanted Paul to be a banker, a different though possibly no less dreary career than that evergreen favorite of non-musical parents for their gifted offspring—the law. Upon the predictable fading of the charms of the *guichet*, Karl (who was growing wary of career feuds with his sons) attempted to humor his wayward offspring with the offer of advanced piano studies, a mistake made by such other well-meaning parents as Dr. Berlioz and Frau Schumann. Paul began extricating himself from the web of paternal ambition upon his return from compulsory military training. He was possibly aided by Karl's by-then severe illness (he was to die in 1913 of cancer).

By 1910, Paul had prevailed and began studies with Leschetizky and his parents' perennial houseguest, Josef Labor. Consent was made easier by Paul's choice of teachers: Leschetizky had trained Artur Schnabel and Ignacy Paderewski while Karl Wittgenstein thought the now-forgotten Labor to be at least the equal of those better-known Viennese, Brahms, Schubert, and Beethoven. Somewhat prophetically, Leschetizky had written a difficult arrangement of the Sextet from *Lucia di Lammermoor* for the left hand alone, of which Paul was particularly fond.

A shy and retiring woman in most respects, Poldy Wittgenstein could be a ferocious critic of her children's playing, shrieking that her grown daughter, a natural stylist, had no sense of rhythm. Her complaint about Paul's playing—"did the piano have to be belabored?"—seems to have been on the mark, however. Leschetizky thought much the same; he called Paul his *saitenknicker* ("key-smasher"). Wittgenstein progressed well under Leschetizky and made a well-reviewed debut in December 1913. Other concerts and recitals followed throughout the winter, concluding with a performance in Vienna in March 1914, the last for two years and with two arms.

After military training, Wittgenstein was commissioned a reserve lieutenant, and upon the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914, he was assigned to the 6th Dragoons (5th Squadron). Leading a reconnaissance patrol near Zamosc, Poland, he was shot in the right arm, the bullet splintering the bone just below the right shoulder. Before capture, he was able to pass word of an impending Russian attack, for which he was subsequently decorated. After undergoing the amputation of his right arm in the military hospital at Krasnostov, Paul was transferred to several other military hospitals before finally being interned in Omsk in Siberia. Czarist prison camps were apparently more plushly appointed than their latter-day successors in the Gulag, and Wittgenstein was able to find an old piano on which he began the long road leading to the rehabilitation of his career.

Though Wittgenstein understood that he would have to retool his technique, he did not realize how arduous his task was to be. Even accomplished pianists find that a tip-top left hand is difficult to acquire: when one realizes the awkwardness of, and clumsy results achieved by, a person writing with the pencil in the wrong hand, one begins to sense the level of difficulty entailed. The ante is raised when the wrong hand *and* the wrong fingers are required to perform precise and variable movements at high speed (as in typing, except on a much bigger keyboard). When one further realizes that the assigned task for the left hand is one that very few people on earth are able to perform well, even with a willing and able right hand, then the sun begins to emerge over the horizon. When one then grasps that in addition to the reassignment of the right hand role to the left, that the left is also required to discharge a version of its ordinary functions *simultaneously*—in effect, acting as accompaniment to itself—the immensity of the achievement is truly illuminated.

Wittgenstein's case was not unique: a high proportion of the musically significant works for the left hand were written for pianists who

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had hurt themselves. After Clara Schumann injured her right hand pulling out a drawer, she kept her left occupied with Brahms's transcription of J. S. Bach's D minor Chaconne. When he hurt his right hand by overpracticing Liszt's *Don Juan* Fantasy, Alexander Scriabin composed the enchanting *Prelude* and *Nocturne* for his left. Saint-Saëns wrote a series of six studies for his duet partner, Caroline Rémaury-Montigny, when she underwent surgery on her right hand.

Left-hand technique developed out of something more than a full-employment policy for the physically damaged, however. The transcendental effects of the high Romantics were achieved only by the elevation of the left hand to full equality with the right. Carl Czerny, whose relentless pursuit of technical perfection led him to compose more than one thousand opus numbers, started things off with his *School for the Left Hand* and *Twenty Four Studies for the Left Hand.* Other composers and pianists currently relegated to footnote status further improved the technical estate of the left hand, mostly with études and exercises and occasionally with salon pieces and opera paraphrases, all of variable musical interest.

In 1838, the first great composition for the left hand appeared with the publication of Charles-Valentin Alkan's *Trois grandes études pour les mains separées et réunis,* the first of which is the A-flat *Fantaisie.* This sumptuous work is something of a musical Ayers Rock—nothing of its kind had appeared on the pianistic horizon before it, and, in technique, precious little after it until the turn of the century, when Leopold Godowsky started publishing his planetary *Studien über die Etüden von Chopin,* about half of which (22) are written for the left hand. While Chopin's own left-hand writing seldom ranks above six on the Mohs scale, the *Chopin Studies* are possibly the most difficult music ever written. Though Bartók and Felix Blumenthal also wrote attractive études for the left hand, as did the elegant and amusing Moritz Moszkowski and Max Reger, Wittgenstein realized there were still very few first-rate works for the left hand, and virtually none in the chamber and concertante categories. New compositions were needed.

Wittgenstein returned from Russia in December 1915. "After I had returned to Vienna, I had to undergo a second (but minor) amputation. But after this, I immediately determined upon the plan of training myself to become a one-armed pianist, at least to attempt it," he said. Wittgenstein was inspired in part by the experience of a family acquaintance, Count Géza Zichy. After Zichy lost his arm in a hunting mishap, he developed a left-hand technique powerful enough to hold the stage with Liszt when the two of them performed works for three hands. After Wittgenstein completed his convalescence at the *palais,* he returned to serious practice. While a prisoner in Omsk, Wittgenstein had written to Josef Labor about his injury and the old composer prepared a piano quartet, a violin sonata, and a *konzertstücke,* the piano parts all written for the left hand.

For the next year, Wittgenstein studied and prepared the Labor works. It was extremely difficult work; Labor knew his pupil well and spared neither his capabilities nor his temper. Practice was exhausting, for although Wittgenstein was spiritually committed to his new career, he was learning that the demands of a left-hand technique on which *everything* depended were altogether different from a left-hand technique that could be aided and abetted by an agile and willing right hand.

Wittgenstein returned to the stage in December 1916 with the first of five concerts. The results were distressing; even after a year's preparation, Wittgenstein's shortcomings were evident. Although demobbed in March 1916, he rejoined the army and was posted to the Italian front in mid-1917, remaining there until August 1918. Returning to Vienna, he withdrew from public life, confining himself to the *palais.*

True musical recluses are not all that rare and the breed instinctively returns to light before the reputation perishes. Wittgenstein used his seclusion to further refine his pianistics. After Leschetizsky's death in 1915, Wittgenstein taught himself, and from 1918 to 1921, he built a formidable technique by practicing seven hours a day. In the process, he developed a unique body of exercises that he later published as part of a three-volume work of exercises, études, and transcriptions for the left hand. He successfully sifted through music libraries and second-hand shops for forgotten left-hand works and discovered the *Chopin Studies,* the originals of which he had per-

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formed during his ambidextrous phase.

Autodidactic technique in place, Wittgenstein then assumed his late father's role as musical patron. Though this began with the Labor works, Wittgenstein began to use his considerable wealth and contacts to procure new works. Between 1920 and 1940, the period of his most intense concert activity, Wittgenstein commissioned almost thirty large-scale piano pieces for the left hand.

Richard Strauss often stayed in the Alleegasse, and while he had not written a concerto since his *Burlesque* some forty years before, he was buttonholed by Paul for exactly that purpose. The idea did not immediately appeal to Strauss; an essentially programmatic composer, he had no suitable themes for a left-hand work. That changed a few years later when Strauss's son Franz contracted typhus while honeymooning in Egypt. After his son's slow recovery, Strauss wrote a thankpiece called *Parergon zu Sinfonia Domestica,* which, after certain heated discussions with Wittgenstein, was successfully given its premiere in 1925. The *Parergon* was an inspired work for both Strauss, who happily extracted it from a subfile in his *Death and Transfiguration* directory, and Wittgenstein, for whom it was a musical allegory of his own triumph over affliction. Strauss was pleased enough with the result to start unbidden on the equally bizarrely entitled *Panathenäenzug,* a complicated passacaglia in the form of variations for piano and orchestra. The title is taken from the famous artistic celebration in ancient Greece and appears to have been inspired by Beethoven's *Ruins of Athens.*

Wittgenstein was highly partial to the theme-and-variation form, and nine works were written for him in this style. The earliest of these works was the splendid *Concertante Variations* by Franz Schmidt. Based on the little tripping theme from the Scherzo of Beethoven's F Major Violin Sonata, the work appealed strongly to Wittgenstein with its classical styling, overall wit, and climactic finale. "The end is peace," wrote Tovey, "though the hearthrug be in pieces."

The new and ever-expanding repertoire made possible Wittgenstein's subsequent public acclaim and critical success. The family archive in Vienna contains dozens of admiring reviews of Paul's European performances throughout the 1920s and 1930s and the Performing Arts Library at Lincoln Center contains more regarding his American concerts, with no dissenting opinion in sight. The reborn career was not without birthpangs, though these were mostly felt by others. Paul Hindemith's correspondence to Wittgenstein regarding his *Kammermusik* is characteristic. "Perhaps you will be a bit upset at first, but that really won't matter for long," reads one nervously amused passage. Hindemith considerably underestimated the length, width, and depth of Wittgenstein's upset: the *Kammermusik* remained unpublished for many years. A similar fate befell Prokofiev's fourth piano concerto, first performed only in September 1956, by another unnatural lefty, the pianist Siegfried Rapp. Prokofiev's biographers let themselves off the leash in describing this episode, one of them concluding that Wittgenstein was "insanely puffed up," though relations between the two artists continued amicably.

But the incident that reached true *cause celèbre* status and cast Wittgenstein as an unrestrained trammeler of the creative spirit was *l'affaire Ravel.* The brooding Concerto in D Major is perhaps the best known work for the left hand. George Kugel, Wittgenstein's manager, arranged a meeting between the pianist and the composer in 1929, at the height of Ravel's fame. Ravel was delighted by the commission and the technical problems involved in creating the left-hand part. "The concerto must not be a stunt. The listener must never feel that more could have been accomplished with two hands," Ravel said, sentiments which pleased Wittgenstein no end. Wittgenstein first heard the work at Le Belvédère, Ravel's home, in August 1930 and was less than completely enchanted. As with the *Parergon,* Wittgenstein feared that much of the piano part, especially in the middle of the work, would be overwhelmed by the orchestra. Although Wittgenstein asked for a more prominent role for the piano, Ravel refused, saying that it would ruin the work.

After months of discussion, Wittgenstein capitulated and played the work as written. It became his signature piece and was the means by which Wittgenstein made his triumphant entry to the American concert scene in 1934. Other composers were less fortunate. Benjamin Britten was irritated at the extensive revisions made by Wittgenstein to his *Diversions*

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on a Theme, composed in Maine in 1940 while Britten was, in Kingsley Amis's words, "continuing the struggle against fascism from there." In Wittgenstein's defense, however, hyper-strict interpretations were still relatively novel and his own pedagogical tradition heavily emphasized the art of improvisation.

Wittgenstein made his debut in the United States in November 1934, when he played the Ravel concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This was the start of an extremely successful recital and concert career in this country that only tapered off in the 1950s. His first performance was well received, though one eminent critic confused the pianist with a New York musician named Victor Wittgenstein, who played with both hands. This was not the first time that Victor and Paul had crossed paths. Years before, Victor had scheduled a recital in Paris where the impresario got the program right (standard-issue Chopin and Schumann) but the Wittgenstein wrong: Victor was advertised as the "famous one-armed pianist." Concertgoers were understandably fascinated; while one-armed pianists were known to have performed works written or adapted for the remaining limb, no one so handicapped had yet claimed to be able to play works (and an entire program of them) that were difficult for most two-handed executants. Not surprisingly, boos and whistles greeted the bilateral Victor when he walked on stage that evening with every intention of playing in conventional fashion.

While Paul Wittgenstein was establishing his American career, his brother's old schoolmate was engaged in grand-scale mischief-making in Europe. In March 1938, the *Anschluss* effected to his satisfaction, Adolf Hitler was well on his way to ensuring that "Germanism could only be safeguarded by the destruction of Austria," as he wrote in *Mein Kampf.* Among other things, as a vassal-state, Austria would henceforth be subject to the Nuremburg Laws. This was evil news indeed, even for Jews as rich as the Wittgensteins.

But Karl Wittgenstein's patronage extended from beyond the grave to preserve his descendants. On retiring in 1898 at the age of fifty-two, Karl transferred his colossal wealth into land and foreign investments. His motivation was to "take into account not only all obvious factors, but also those uncertain ones that the future holds." Those assets were held in labyrinthine ownership arrangements in Switzerland, arrangements so devious and clever that forty years later even the grimly efficient Reichsbank was unable to pry those moneys loose. From 1938, Paul urged the family to flee, but his otherworldly sisters, Hermine and Helene, refused to leave Austria, believing they would never be rousted from their privileged surroundings.

The exasperated Paul fled to Switzerland in July 1938 and settled in New York later that year. To ensure that their domestic arrangements remained undisturbed, Ludwig, Hermine, and Helene agreed, over Paul's principled and strenuous objections, to transfer a large portion of the family wealth to the Reichsbank in exchange for a certification from the Reich's Department of Genealogical Research that the descendants of Hermann Christian Wittgenstein were indubitably *deutschsblütig.* The perverse sisters survived near the eye of the Holocaust, but Paul broke from them and Ludwig permanently.

After settling in the United States, Wittgenstein continued to concertize, but his interest in teaching grew. He accepted positions at the Ralph Wolfe Conservatory in New Rochelle, later to become part of Mannes College, and at Manhattanville. His recordings dating from this time reveal a slight heaviness of touch, a reversion, perhaps, to those comments made by Poldy and Leschetizky almost a half century before.

Wittgenstein was active musically until a year before his death. He died on Long Island on March 3, 1961, leaving a wife, three children, and that extraordinary body of compositions for the left hand. Today, a number of these works have fallen into neglect, but all of them are affecting monuments to Paul Wittgenstein's refusal to accept the decision of his Russian surgeons as final.

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Floors

The Bronx—Then

RUTH GAY

My mother lived in a house with a beaten earth floor. She never told me this. I only learned it by chance when my father taunted her with it in response to her fine airs and manners. My mother-in-law came from Warsaw, where she had lived in an apartment building made of stone. The stories of these floors became a talisman of sorts, for one the source of shame, for the other of amusement. My mother-in-law loved to tell the story of how she prepared for her first Sabbath in the New Country. Wanting to wash the kitchen floor, she filled a bucket with water and preparatory to wielding the mop, flung the contents on the floor. Shrieks from her downstairs neighbors, pounding on the door, protests about the *"griner"*—the greenhorn. In Warsaw, she had lived with stone floors; how was she to know that in the New World floors were made of lesser stuff.

Even in the New World, floors—kitchen floors especially—were sure barometers of a housewife's standards and ability. When I came home from school on Friday afternoons, it was at the culmination of the day's and the week's race with the clock to bring the apartment into a state of perfect cleanliness before Sabbath rest overtook us. I would arrive to find the kitchen chairs stacked in the living room, while the freshly washed kitchen floor was drying. It would then be covered with pathways of newspapers, to prevent the marring of the perfect surface, until finally at some point when the newspapers themselves created a mass of crumpled debris underfoot, they would be lifted up to expose the pristine floor. Cleanliness was more than a good in itself. It was a test of character, a measure of worth, of competence. One of the most devastating judgments of that time was the whisper that a certain neighbor was "dirty." Now cleanliness did not have anything to do with orderliness or repose—in fact, I mostly remember it being achieved at the cost of immense upheaval, bad temper, and tension about time, since Orthodox Jewish housewives set themselves rigorous standards of work to be accomplished by the end of every Friday—the "end" being measured inexorably by the time that the sun set. And a winter Friday was heartbreakingly short given the amount of work that had to be compressed into it.

I would awaken early, early in the morning to the sound of my mother wielding the *hackmesser*—the round-edged chopping knife—as she pounded the gefilte fish mixture. Although the fish had already been ground, the last stages of preparation called for a final reduction by hand in the wooden chopping bowl reserved for this purpose. As I left for school, I would see the parts of the stove dismantled in the sink in some terrible lye solution so strong as to require my mother to use heavy rubber gloves.

Then the beds were treated to their weekly dousing of kerosene against bed bugs. Only much later did I realize what a terrible fire hazard was being prepared here in the name of cleanliness. The fear of bed bugs—*vantsen*—organized the housewife's working day. Beds

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were not made in the morning. It would only encourage the spontaneous generation of these vermin, it was believed, to enclose the warm, breathing air in which we had slept inside tight covers. Instead, the windows were flung open—even on the coldest winter days—the mattresses folded in half, and the pillows and featherbeds put out on the windowsill to air. Air and sun were the great panaceas and healers of New York tenement life. They prevented bed bugs; they forestalled tuberculosis; they brought good health. They were the hallmark of respectability. It was the search for air and sun that led to the migration from the Lower East Side, and even from Harlem, to the quiet streets of Brooklyn and the heights of the Bronx.

Only in late afternoon was the bedding taken in, the windows closed, and the beds restored to some semblance of normality. Bed bugs were not only in themselves a troublesome and unhealthy plague. More than that, they were a source of shame—and it was shame rather than hygiene, I think, that drove the housewives to scour their apartments and vie with one another in setting absolute standards for their cleanliness.

My mother was actually a poor housekeeper—no housekeeper at all by American standards—but she, too, was drawn into its simulacrum by her need to assert her standing as a housewife. In that community to be a *berye*, the Yiddish superlative for housewife, was the highest compliment for a woman. It conveyed skill, shrewdness, accomplishment, a capacity for getting things done. To tell the truth, my mother's gefilte fish was terrible, and we lived all week long in a welter of disorder and makeshift arrangements. But Friday, the climax of the week, the day of preparation for the Sabbath exerted its power even over her—and no matter how inept she was in her household management, old memories stirred. The atmosphere of our neighborhood, which took on an extraordinary bustle on Friday mornings, also motivated her to take what was largely symbolic, if drastic, action.

My mother had come to this country as little more than a child of thirteen with her sister Chana, who was fifteen months older than she. Traveling with a woman from their village in Galicia, they had crossed the ocean living on their stock of bread and herring brought from home and arrived to be taken in by their oldest brother, Asher, now "Harry," and his wife, Feigele, now "Fanny." She was prepared for marvels in the Golden Land. But her first great puzzle came as they were driving in her brother's buggy through the Lower East Side and she saw the high, closely packed tenements. These were understandable. What she couldn't understand were the lines of washing hung out to dry, four and five stories above the ground. How did anyone reach them?

Her bewilderment about the laundry and embarrassment about asking, like my mother-in-law's miscalculation about the floors, marked the beginning of a pattern of confusion and disorientation. What it elicited was a style of caution and withdrawal to safer ground, where the hazard of making mistakes or of being mocked as a *griner* was reduced. But it left a residue of uncertainty, a loss of confidence that stamped their experience with "America." My mother-in-law, after all, arrived as a married woman with two children. She, unlike my mother, could and did remain safely embedded in her family, never learning much English and never needing to, living as she did in an entirely Yiddish-speaking world. There she could be expansive, authoritative, dramatic.

For my mother, however, who arrived in the country as a child, and immediately went to work in a shirt factory, wariness became a way of life. In her shop the other operators at the sewing machines were young Jewish girls like herself, but she went to school at night to learn English. For a long time, however, it remained the language of strangers. In her family, as in the shop, she lived in the self-enclosed world of the immigrant. From moment to moment, her life went on in Yiddish and not only in conversation. New York at that time was rich in its offering of Yiddish newspapers, magazines, cabarets, and theaters—especially theaters. The theater, with its stars and matinee idols, such as Boris Thomashevsky, my mother's favorite, was the magnet of the working girl.

In the years just before the First World War, the Yiddish theater in New York was at its height. Its eager patrons were the shop workers like my mother, the storekeepers, artisans, laborers, and peddlers—the whole immigrant generation, newly arrived and passionate about the theater. It gave them back their lives, heightened, beautified, in el-

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evated language—in a word, dramatized.

Of course my mother had never experienced the theater in the tiny shtetl in Galicia from which she came. And certainly her father would never have approved. A Hasid, fervently devoted to the Chortkover Rebbe, he saw each of his five children leave for the Golden Land but stayed behind because for him it was a *treyfe medine*—an unkosher, an unholy, land whose embrace corrupted life itself. His was not the only family that lost its children to the attractions of the New World. The miseries and intermittent pogroms that marked shtetl life—these days so shamelessly sentimentalized—led to an exodus of the young and strong and hopeful that amounted to nearly three million Jews between 1880 and the beginning of the First World War. When my mother sent her father money from her slender earnings, he pleaded with her to desist, since the money, too, was *treyf*.

This was a sorrow to my mother, who adored her learned and saintly father. But it did not interfere with her newfound pleasures. In her late teens, as an experienced "operator" she began to specialize in the shop and, at piecework rates, set collars on the body of shirts from morning to night. But this meant high earnings, and, living under her brother's roof, she had money left over for finery on a grand scale. She patronized a dressmaker and ordered elegant evening wear for the theater, for *simchas*—celebrations—for weddings. I saw two of these fantasies that survived into my own childhood: one a heavily beaded, sleeveless, pink satin dance dress, the other an elaborate, full-skirted, full-sleeved confection in black cut velvet—a fabric whose like I have never seen since.

It was a hybrid world, of course, where old customs and new opportunities were blended, and in the rich Jewish culture of New York City in the first decades of this century, new rules began to govern the habits of Jewish life. It was understood that the Yiddish theater would not give performances on Friday night or Saturday. But Saturday at sundown and Sundays the box offices opened to great crowds. As my mother told me, people didn't buy tickets in advance—a remnant of Old World fearfulness, where one didn't tempt fate by making advance preparations. So the hubbub and excitement in the lobbies of these theaters before performances were heightened by anxiety over whether one would reach the head of the line before all the tickets were sold.

What the public loved above all were the melodramas that reflected the all-too-vivid drama in their own lives: stories of abandoned wives, estranged American children, neglected parents, interspersed with heady musicals and tales from the old country—a mixture that reflected the homesickness already being translated into sugary nostalgia as in the song "Mayn shtetele Belz" and the real problems of immigration.

Is it any wonder that Shakespeare's *Lear*, with its theme of the ingratitude of children, was a tremendous hit on Second Avenue? Shakespeare was, in fact, a familiar playwright to Jewish audiences, so familiar that translators took liberties. One announcement for *Hamlet* advertised that the play had been not only translated but also *improved* for its presentation in Yiddish—*"ibergezetst un farbessert."*

The immigrant audiences of the 1920s were easily reduced to tears—either by happy endings or by tragic ones. This was a young audience, uprooted from "home," anxious about their livelihood, about staying afloat in the New World, struggling to reconcile what they had been taught in the Old Country with the unexpected freedoms and prospects of America. For many who came as young teenagers, "home" as a place, as a way of life, faded. What remained were the memories of parents left behind, memories of themselves as children. But these were rapidly overlaid by the configuration of a totally different society and the wish to enter somehow into that new world.

When they had grown up enough to marry, few of these children had family mementos with which to start a household. At best, like my mother, they had brought a down quilt—a *perene* covered in a sturdy red chambray, whose contents were guarded like diamonds. When on occasion the down needed to be cleaned or the cover renewed, like the pearls that ladies went to Tiffany to have restrung, my mother would take her quilt to the refurbisher and watch every step of the process to make sure that *her* down, and only her down, was returned to the new covering. Having stripped geese herself for the down, she was a connoisseur in these matters and would sometimes squeeze a doubtful pillow between

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her fingers to test whether the little spines were still there. This *perene* was her sole tangible connection to "home." It was the older ones, the married couples or the brides, who arrived with firmer remembrances—their silver candlesticks or even a silver samovar wrapped in their down quilt. But beyond the essential comforter, the young ones, like my mother, came without possessions, ready and even anxious to furnish their lives with the goods of the New World.

What was perhaps unexpected was their hunger for splendor, coming as they did from villages where benches were more common at the table than chairs. Unlike the settlement-house workers who saw morality in straight lines and recommended plain deal furniture for immigrant homes, my parents and their neighbors invested in curves, high finishes, ornate carvings, and elaborately patterned linoleum rugs. I spent many hours of my childhood hanging head down from our couch, tracing the palmettes and stylized flowers of the linoleum on the floor with my finger, and it was not until I was nine or ten years old that I first understood that there were soft woven carpets on which our replica was based. This discovery came in the living room of a school friend who lived in the neighborhood, but whose father occupied a very respected place in our little world. He was the neighborhood pharmacist, which practically made him a doctor, which was as far as one's imagination could stretch. Unless it was to a "professor." In dire medical cases, the victim was sometimes operated on by a "professor"—a sign of both privilege and despair.

Although our pharmacist lived in our neighborhood, he was clearly much more prosperous than we were, and his apartment had not only a soft and splendid Chinese rug but, looming over it all (since that was my perspective), a baby grand piano, which was played in what seemed to me a dazzling style by my classmate's older sister. In my imagination, the two, piano and rug, flowed together, conveying as an ensemble warmth, culture, and luxury. I don't know if my parents really believed what they said when they criticized the rug's unhygienic nature—how it retained dust, polluting the air and one's lungs. A linoleum rug, on the other hand, could always be scrubbed, its shining surface a guarantee of its health-giving properties.

This dismissive attitude was not entirely convincing to me when I thought about the pharmacist's world—the softness, the grandness, the cosmopolitanism of it all. The piano-playing sister eventually married a German refugee and moved to Pittsburgh—all elements of unthinkable foreignness and distance given our tightly held circle of family. Of course, our family and their friends and *landsleit* all came from Europe—but from the same part of Europe and were, therefore, known quantities to one another, speaking in the comforting vernacular of Yiddish. But Germany? That was another world.

As for doctors and pharmacists, my parents' attitude toward these professionals was at the very least one of profound respect. It was a respect based on the same bewilderment that shaped their way of managing in the world. The university and medical education were beyond their imagining. It was not clear to them how or where one entered the ladder to such accomplishment. But there was no doubt that these were men at the apex of humanity who could and did live on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. This splendid avenue, a miniature Champs Elysées, with its green center meridian and its handsome apartment houses, was the culminating point of anyone's aspirations. It even ran along a ridge, which made it literally the high point of the Bronx, dividing east and west, and like the Champs Elysées, it was a favorite promenade ground on weekends and holidays. Here not only the apartments but even the lobbies, attended by uniformed doormen, were carpeted in precious Oriental rugs weighted down by dark, heavily carved Renaissance tables with man-high Chinese vases guarding cavernous corners.

Once, when I had broken my arm, I had the occasion to visit one of these buildings for several Sundays running to see the doctor who had set my arm and was checking on its progress. I would come in the morning, pass through the hushed lobby, and take the elevator to the apartment. Here I would sometimes see the son of the family—a boy about my age—vanishing down a hallway in what seemed like illimitable space, having just picked up the newspaper that had been *delivered* to the door. It was this whiff of another life that made me think not only of the carpets—but of the life, the kind of life that was lived with Oriental rugs under foot and with

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the sort of service that brought a newspaper to the door on a snowy morning.

These glimpses, however brief, showed me a life different from what I knew. I endowed this family with everything that I longed for and found missing at home: the order, repose, and regularity of people who knew their way, who knew how to command the world as my parents did not—who knew, in fact, how to live. Very early I saw my parents as plainly adrift, confident enough at home, but easily intimidated by officials, by authority. My father, who was accustomed to tyrannize over a family of women, could be reduced to silence and submission by a word from a policeman or a government form letter, while my mother, as if arming us for an inevitable struggle, said, "You know who you are, no matter what people say." What went on in the glorious spaces on the Grand Concourse, by contrast, was an existence where people spoke softly, their desires cosseted, their senses indulged. It was something to mull over.

The only carpet that I ever saw that had been brought from the Old Country belonged to a Romanian family. Roughly woven, it did not speak of repose and luxury, but it added depth to the history of the family for whom it was a prized possession. It was large and giddily colored, with a pattern of red and pink roses on a green ground, and it hung on the wall over their couch, not to be profaned by being trodden upon. The Romanians—already unique in a Polish-Russian enclave—seemed even more exotic because they had this substantial talisman from home, as if this carpet held them closer to the old ways than we who traveled with so little baggage.

Despite my parents' acceptance of their linoleum rug, I began to think, secretly, that they were missing something. Did they not know or care about the originals on which this poor cold thing was based? What I did not realize until much later was that this was a perfect example of how they managed the hand that life dealt them. Whatever they had or achieved was good and excellent, a testimony to their industry and prudence. Beyond that was excess, showiness, waste. My father could still remember vividly the hunger of his orphaned childhood, and my mother from her early teens knew the precarious life of a wage earner. A steady job—especially as the Depression deepened—was the utmost limit of one's dreams. It made a linoleum rug an excellent floor covering.

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The Achievement of Franco Venturi

HAROLD S. STONE

Franco Venturi's *Settecento riformatore (The Reformers of Eighteenth-Century Italy)* ranks among the major achievements of historical research completed in these the twilight years of the twentieth century. The eight-volume work, which began to be published in 1969 (the entire work is published by Einaudi in Turin), describes the history of Italian intellectual life from the 1730s to the era of the French Revolution. Venturi's conception of the Italian Enlightenment is not limited to activities undertaken within the political boundaries of Italian states. Whole volumes are devoted to the vital cosmopolitan interests of Italian scholars and publicists. Venturi's research has uncovered the significant accomplishment of several generations of politically committed men and women who responded in creative ways to the events and challenges of their times. Most of the individuals he discusses were unknown even to specialists in the eighteenth century; in fact, Venturi's research has opened up a field of study that had been largely unexplored even in Italy itself.

Before Venturi's work, the notion that the Italian Enlightenment had a significant and interesting history would have been greeted by most historians at best with mild skepticism. Academic colleagues in English departments might have greater awareness of things Italian. They at least were apt to teach the impassioned rhythms of Milton's sonnet on the persecution of Protestants by the rulers of Piedmont ("Avenge O Lord thy slaughter'd Saints"), and Wordsworth's sonnet mourning the destruction of Venice's ancient republic. They did not lose sight of certain aspects of Italian culture: Goldoni's plays were understood to amuse; Guardi's canvases were a delight; and a salutary lesson might be drawn from the fact that, while the Marquis de Sade finished his life in a madhouse, Casanova ended his days as a librarian. Mozart's librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, wound up his career affiliated with Columbia University, so there must be something to these Italians. Besides such anecdotal bits, Beccaria's arguments against capital punishment were recognized as an important contribution to Enlightenment ideas. Still, when historians considered Italy's role in the Enlightenment, it was as an imitation of the real thing—the French *siècle des lumières.*

An obvious way to account for the lack of interest in eighteenth-century Italy is to point out that the Italian Renaissance was a tough act to follow. Scholarly study of the Renaissance has so shaped our perception of Italy that it takes a splendid and wild revolutionary such as Garibaldi, or the issue of Mussolini and the rise of fascism, to get us to attend to the actual events of Italian history. Politics, in this case, lost to culture. Most interpretations of the Renaissance have accepted the view that the period is best understood by means of the categories of cultural history and have thus paid less attention to affairs of state than to trends in the visual arts, the period's concern for the transmission of ancient texts, and its delight in fine writing.

In some respects, this was a surprising historiographical twist. After all, the muscular political histories of Machiavelli and Guicciardini had an energy that inspired Burckhardt's vivid portrait of the Italian despots with which he began his classic *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy.* This promotion of *civilization,* to use

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Burckhardt's term, over political history extended its influence to interpretations of post-Renaissance Italian history. The consequence was that, for many, Italy had no history after the sack of Rome in 1527 until, perhaps, unification, or the rise of fascism in the 1920s.

The majority view about the Enlightenment is that it was primarily an activity of intellectuals publishing along the London-Amsterdam-Paris axis, and according to some, a primary characteristic of these thinkers was their commitment to abstract and rational values, which made them incapable of political action. The brilliance of this elite, the argument ran, was heightened by the fact that its thought and sentiment were untouched by the impulse to effect change. The few Enlightenment individuals interested in radical innovation were associated with such groups as the Freemasons, or were thought of as promoters of irrational enthusiasms. This useful generalization, when joined with the grand tour notion of Italy as the place where northerners went to get painted amidst picturesque ruins, made it easy to see the Italian Enlightenment as a flaccid copy of a French original. Works of genuine merit, it was presumed, were the products of an abstract dialogue with thinkers in Paris rather than the signs of a vibrant local intellectual scene. With such presuppositions, it is not surprising that the Italian Enlightenment was little studied. Since it was implausible to see it as the end of the Italian Renaissance, some made it a precursor to the Risorgimento, but most left the topic alone, presuming it humdrum.

Venturi's break with this view is marked by his 1954 work on Alberti Radicati di Passerano, a freethinker from Piedmont, whose passionate irreligion prompted him to seek the limited shelter afforded an atheist by England and the Netherlands in the 1720s and 1730s. Radicati, in his wild and confused way, was interested in practical reforms and not in indulging in rarefied reflections about the social virtues that would result when political leaders publicly denied the existence of divine providence. The failure to find an appropriate venue, or rather a sovereign to enact his program, drove him to the utopian speculations of his final writings and his deathbed conversion to Calvinism.

For Venturi, the hallmark of Italy's Enlightenment reformers was a political activism whose programs were informed by a cosmopolitan experience and the belief that the public discussion of ideas might yield insights of universal significance. His description of Radicati's career and writings adumbrated the method to be developed in *Settecento riformatore,* emphasizing analysis of textual content, the responses to it found in contemporary book-review journals, and the attempt to trace out the work's readership. Most of the authors Venturi would study were available in only the original editions and, in some cases, only in manuscript. Before preparing his history, Venturi published, between 1958 and 1965, three substantial volumes of texts by Italy's reformers. These are part of the massive *La letteratura italiana. Storia e testi* series *(Italian Letters. History and Texts);* Venturi's volumes appear in a subseries of seven entitled *Illuministi italiani (Writers of the Italian Enlightenment).* (A full bibliography of Venturi's publications and biographical information can be found in the 1985 festschrift dedicated to him, *L'etá dei lumi (The Era of Enlightened Thinkers).* The writers included in these volumes were from all regions of Italy; one of the most impressive aspects of Venturi's synthesis is his mastery of the very different intellectual communities and political traditions of the major cities of the peninsula.

Venturi divides his history into five major sections. The first, which serves as an introduction to the whole, describes the intellectual context of reform from the 1730s to the mid-1760s. The projects and plans of this period aimed at changing the judicial relations between the church and state, the traditional authority of the aristocracy, conceptions about taxation and monetary policy, and the hierarchy and procedures of the institutions of central government. The second volume emphasizes the successful campaign to abolish the Jesuit order. It exemplifies the kind of conjunction possible between the interests of the state and the ambition of the intellectuals, as well as the limits for any state-directed reform. Parts 3 and 4 deal with the years 1768 to 1789; volume 3 has the subtitle *The First Crisis of the Old Regime;* volume 4, which is divided in two parts, has the title *The Fall of the Old Regime.*

These works describe the interactions between Italian intellectuals and a Europe so broadly conceived that it stretches from Philadelphia, through Paris, London, and Amster-

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dam, to Stockholm, Greece, Turkey, and Russia. (These volumes have been translated by R. Burr Litchfield and published by Princeton University Press [1989–1991]; the volumes have been classified in a confusing manner by the Library of Congress, being given call numbers in two separate locations.) The three parts of volume 5 share the title *L'Italia dei lumi (Italy and the Enlightenment);* its theme continues the narrative begun in the first volume. Venturi describes the crises confronting the ruling classes of the Italian states and concludes with a history of reform movements in the major centers of Italian political life. The work ends as the energies unleashed by the French Revolution at first heightened the felt need for reform, then replaced this impulse with a press of events that produced merely haphazard change.

The subject matter covered by Venturi is outside the traditional concerns of Anglo-American eighteenth-century studies, and even the methods and the kinds of evidence he develops are novel. A summary tour through his main topics and a brief account of his method yields an appreciation of his work. Volume 1 was published in 1969, which is five years after the final volume of R. R. Palmer's *Age of the Democratic Revolution* (1959–1964) and in between the appearance of Peter Gay's two-volume *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (1967–1970). Venturi continued the international emphasis of their work but, as subsequent volumes made clear, he did not propose a single theme or pattern to unify his study. Instead he conveys delight in the variety of incident, a curiosity about different experiences, and an enthusiasm for local developments and history that formed the core values of the reformers he studies. Venturi modifies their approach by balancing the way the North Atlantic world criticized the old regime against that of the Mediterranean. He argues that to understand the crises of the end of the eighteenth century, scholars need to attend to events in Europe's periphery as well as those at the center.

Venturi begins volume 1 in the early 1730s when Italy had reached a low point in its political history. At first glance this might not seem an apt place to start, but the wisdom of such a periodization and what it implicitly excludes is justifiable. It allows him to avoid the involutions that characterized the intellectual history of the last decades of the seventeenth and the first third of the eighteenth centuries. The adequate treatment of this era would have involved many issues irrelevant to the themes of his major enterprise. Radicati's exile, and Giannone's flight to Geneva and subsequent imprisonment in Turin, had removed two major figures of the 1720s from the Italian scene. Vico lived on in Naples, but the influence of his ideas after 1734 was evanescent. Venturi thus sets aside the task of explaining the origins of the complex sensibilities and accomplishments of some of the most creative Italian thinkers of the early eighteenth century.

Venturi does not attempt a synthesis of the so-called long eighteenth century, the 1660s to the 1820s. It should be noted, however, that, in the 1760s, when Giannone's works become widely available for the first time, Venturi draws attention to their influence. And he discusses in detail Vico's curious but profound effect on Venetian writers at the end of the century.

Volume 1 is subtitled *Da Muratori a Beccaria (From Muratori to Beccaria),* though no chapter is devoted solely to either of them. That honor is bestowed on Antonio Genovesi, a Neapolitan priest who has the distinction of being the first to occupy an academic chair dedicated to the teaching of economics. It is not surprising that a Neapolitan is given such prominence because, in Venturi's view, it was the unexpected conquest of Naples by Carlo Borbone in 1734 that shocked Italy out of the doldrums.

This political event, the creation of Naples as an independent kingdom, was regarded as the harbinger of other changes. Indicative of Venturi's approach, the title of the Genovesi chapter is actually "The Naples of Antonio Genovesi." His approach is not a biographical one, and we gain no insights into the kinds of inner confessions that accompanied Genovesi's shift of interests from theology and metaphysics to the problems of political economy. Venturi eschews the ironic distance of the Critical Historian; nor does he use the development of Genovesi as an opportunity to write a history of economic theory before Adam Smith.

This chapter reads as if it were conceived from the point of view of Genovesi's intellectual path and that of an ideal reader living in

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Naples in the 1750s and 1760s. Venturi's intellectual history does not reconstruct the logic of an argument, or generalize it for comparative purposes. Instead he describes how political context, repressive institutions, the patronage implicit in dedicatory letters, reading, and other exchanges interact with the author's creative imagination. Special attention is given to Genovesi's reading of foreign authors made available in contemporary translation. After a detailed account of Genovesi's Naples and his works (in this case an essay of one hundred pages) Venturi concludes:

> Only Genovesi, between the years of the fifties and seventies proved to be in a position to offer a synthesis for his generation, knowing how to enclose in a single volume the confused and impassioned doubts and hopes of his age. What resulted was not a synthesis but a *summa*. Genovesi did not point out a single, direct route, but he contributed more efficaciously than any other to the totality of the Enlightened Reform movement of the second half of the eighteenth century.

Venturi's analysis doesn't stop with publication. He traces the history of subsequent editions and translations. The fact that Genovesi found his most responsive audiences in Russia and in Spain and South America is another bit of evidence Venturi uses to discredit the belief that the only changes of significance in the last decades in the eighteenth century took place in, or in response to, Paris.

Revolution, a category he links and contrasts with reform, is represented by the 1746 insurrection in Genoa. This urban revolution of workers was against the aristocractic rulers who had handed their city over to an invading Austrian army. The remarkable name of Mangiamerda (Eat Shit) is attributed to the leader who began the stone throwing. Venturi discusses the symbolic quality of this personage, concluding that while symbols can be very interesting, they don't make revolutions. The people, after several days of street fighting, drove out the Austrians; they organized a militia and each region of the city had its own distinctive uniform. The government was in the hands of a General Assembly of the people, whose symbol was the Virgin Mary standing above the word *Libertas*.

The capitals of Europe were astounded by the city's tenacious resistance to the Austrians, whose siege of Genoa continued until 1748. But the revolution and plans of reform did not bring about substantial change in the governmental structure.

In this volume Venturi also discusses controversies concerning witchcraft; the charging of interest; and matters related to fiscal reform. His emphasis is on the ideological context as well as on the constraints that economic conditions placed on the possibilities of reform.

The careers of Muratori and Beccaria span the eighteenth century. Muratori had already composed significant works in 1694, a hundred years before Beccaria's death. Muratori was one of the last of the universal geniuses of the seventeenth century. Although he made no substantial contribution to the natural sciences, through his research and writing he essentially created the Italian Middle Ages as a field of historical study, and he made original contributions to the disciplines of literary criticism, political theory, the theory and practice of the law, and theology. His writings also played a significant part in the many controversies affecting the church and state, monetary policy and the regulation of commerce, and projects to organize Italy's intellectual communities and to reform its schools and universities. His hope was to promote an enlightened Catholicism in which ecclesiastical controversy was resolved by historical investigation and reasoned discussion. His works were widely read in Catholic Europe. But, as with many prudent authors genuinely concerned with virtue and the public good, subsequent generations, unaware of the context of his work, dismissed it as merely edifying.

Beccaria has been treated more kindly by posterity, and his 1764 *Dei delitti e delle pene* is recognized as among the great works of the Enlightenment. This book, while influenced by Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, brought something entirely new to the study of civil law and the theory used to justify the punishment of criminals. Those who like their history relevant to contemporary concerns will appreciate Venturi's description of the development and influence of the original arguments against capital punishment.

The title for volume 2, *La chiesa e la repubblica dentro i loro limiti (The Church and Government Within Their Own Boundaries)*, quotes that of an anonymous 1768 work that Venturi convincingly argues is by the Floren-

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tine Cosimo Amidei. Amidei's book concerned the juridical-political quarrel between the Bourbons of Parma and the papacy; but its context was part of a larger struggle centered on the suppression of the Jesuit order. This story deserves to be more widely known and indicates the kind of vigorous action the Bourbon kings were capable of when their interests conbined for a common purpose.

As a narrative the campaign against the Jesuits contains the high moral purpose of the enlightened, with a heavy dose of their brutality towards opposing sentiments and traditions. Venturi describes the controversies that rocked the Catholic world in the 1760s and 1770s. The apparent victory of the interests of the secular state created expectations of a more complete transformation of society. It seemed as if the opportunity for "a reform of Italy," to use the title of Carlo Antonio Pilati's 1757 book, was at hand. The remaining volumes articulate the ways in which radical authors such as Pilati had correctly recognized that the crisis of the old regime had arrived. But even with their cosmopolitan vision and acceptance of the need for systematic but limited reform, the renewal of Italy failed to occur.

Venturi devotes volume 3 and the two parts of volume 4 to document his claim that the value of cosmopolitanism was not simply an official position, or an attitude, but a lived experience for Italian reformers. He gives a novel account describing this period from the point of view of Italian observers. What Venturi calls "the first crisis of the old regime" is occasioned by the decision of Catherine the Great to send a naval expedition from the Baltic to fight the Ottoman Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean. To support such an enterprise, and to whip up enthusiasm for the Greek revolutionaries' efforts against the Turks, Catherine's agents used patronage to acquire interest and influence in Italy. Giovanni del Turco was rewarded for his translation of Catherine's prologomena announcing principles for a planned revision of the Russian legal code. This work gave Catherine the reputation of being an enlightened legislator.

More bizarre was the case of Domenico Diodati, who was rewarded for his promotion of things Greek in a book that argued that the Greek language, not Aramaic, was the language spoken by Christ and his contemporaries. Venturi follows this account of Russia's use of the Greek desire for independence for its own imperial advantage with an account of Pugachev's rebellion and the peasant revolt in Bohemia. He continues his account of the European crisis with the constitutional struggles of Poland, Denmark, Sweden, and Geneva. He concludes with an account of the failure to implement Turgot's reform program in France. The final chapter concerns England's radical parliamentarian John Wilkes and the beginning of the struggle for independence of British North America. The final pages describe the first translation of the Declaration of Independence into Italian.

Volume 4 takes up where volume 3 left off and describes how the Americans at the end of the 1780s developed a new constitutional and republican government, and thus successfully reformed the regime that had won its war of independence against England. Venturi contrasts this success story with a two-part description of the old regime's failed attempts to reform itself. The first part is called "The Great States of the West." After the account of the experiment of American federalism, he describes how Britain avoided the opportunity of reform and how the great efforts of the ministers Pombal in Portugal and Floridablanca in Spain were impeded by numerous forms of inertia. Venturi concludes with France, describing the confused and ambiguous attitudes of its political leaders, who appear exhausted and distracted in contrast to intellectuals such as Diderot and publicists such as Raynal and Linguet.

Part 2, subtitled "Republican patriotism and the empires of the East," continues Venturi's European tour beginning with the revolutions in Geneva and The Netherlands. He then surveys the reform projects of the enlightened absolutists Joseph II and Catherine the Great. Joseph is his prime example of the limitations of this approach to reform. Venturi's knowledge of Russia and the Russian scene makes these sections of particular interest. He turns to Sweden and Poland and then concludes with France and the summoning of the Estates General. The general lesson that Venturi draws from this is that the shared delusion of the age was that technical solutions, by improving and rationalizing the present system, would make an open, public, and critical examination of

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the founding ideas and principles of the old regime unnecessary. The dogged attempts to bring about change without hard thinking made revolution the only option.

Volumes 3 and 4 are not in the usual sense a history of Europe in the 1770s and 1780s. To be sure, Venturi is making an argument about the way we should consider these decades, but at the same time, his sources are not primarily modern historical scholarship and government records but the contemporary Italian gazettes, newsletters, memoirs, travelogues, and essays. We learn about Sweden from an eyewitness, Domenico Michelessi, and of Denmark from Isidoro Bianchi (who prepared the first Italian translation of Hume's *Essays).* Venturi writes:

> The discovery and utilization of public archives has been an important stage in the evolution of historical interpretation. But the return to the documents that contemporaries read and commented upon, as much as what was said and done publicly, are indispensable to really understand those contrasts between liberty and despotism, reform and revolt, that constituted in Sweden as well, the essential character of the period we have been examining.

This appears to echo the argument of the social historians who claimed that history needed to be written from the bottom up. Venturi's instruction to intellectual historians is not to quantify data but to read carefully. He follows the various fortunes of European states based on accounts found in the news magazines published in Florence and Venice. The very existence of these journals indicates the development and perhaps creation of an Italian public opinion.

The intellectual world of the Republic of Letters, which in the early years of the eighteenth century found its voice in journals such as the *Acta Eruditorum,* had been replaced by a more popular, more humanistic conception of the public sphere. Free and rational discourse was no longer limited to the concerns of scholars, but judgments about the purpose and meaning of the actions of contemporary statesmen were now topics open to public—that is—printed discussion. Venturi's frequent citations of what might be called the popular culture of intellectuals will not be to everyone's taste; readers are more tolerant of the details of the shared beliefs and behaviors of urban workers and farmers than the myths and delusions of journalists and scholars.

A different kind of intellectual history would have spent similar effort to tease out origins of ideas from previous centuries. Instead of background in the traditional sense, Venturi has constructed what might be called the Italian consciousness of Europe, and specifically of the growing European awareness of the need for reform. This new perception is transformed by the energy generated by the iconoclasm of French intellectuals of the 1770s and 1780s. This also means that Venturi offers no spirit of the age but seeks to preserve the variety of human thinking of this period in all its complexity and its limitations.

It is with this Italo-European construct that Venturi turns to the final volume of his history. This describes the work of enlightened Italian reformers in the last third of the eighteenth century. Volume 5 should be read as being in continual dialogue with the terrain surveyed in the previous two volumes. Volume 5 is divided into three parts and takes up, more or less, where we were at the end of volume 1. Chronologically, it covers the same ground as volumes 2 through 4, but it is conceived from an entirely different point of view. Part 1 is divided into three immense chapters. The first concerns Pasquale Paoli and his Corsican revolt, which attempted to found a government not based on kings or aristocrats. This republican model echoes the politics encountered earlier with Radicati. The chapter acts as a premonition; it is worth remembering that Corsica's fate of being gobbled up by France was to be the common lot of all Italian states by the end of the century.

The second chapter concerns the famine that devastated Tuscany, Rome, and southern Italy and Naples in 1764. The misery of the Italian countryside showed both the weakness of the old regime and the inadequacy of its response to the challenges of its time. The consequence, in the south, was the strengthening of the position of the conservative forces of society. It also gave new direction and passion to Genovesi's pained reflections on the barriers to human progress in southern Italy. Tuscany was a different matter and the new initiatives of Leopold had perhaps greater longevity than the flashier reform movement in Milan.

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Lombard reform, and its relation to the complex reform project of Joseph II already encountered in its northern European manifestations in volume 4, is the concern of the last chapter. This is the Milan of Beccaria, Pompeo Neri, Pietro Verri, and Alessandro Volta. Despite and probably because of the energetic support of Joseph II, many reform projects were stymied by the end of the 1780s. Joseph was enthusiastic about change directed from the institutions of the central government and sought to destroy local, traditional bodies. His methods created a hostile, conservative patriotism among some, a hostile, republican patriotism among others.

Part one's three chapters cover eight hundred pages; part 2, which concerns Venice, is half the size and contains forty-five chapters. It is as if we have left the grand, complex structures of Mahler for the concise statements of Satie. Venturi indicates something of the niche-like character of many aspects of Venetian history and life. The diversity and highly textured nature of the city, the traditions of its family networks, infuse a new historical consciousness that is informed by a creative reading of Montesquieu, Vico, and the works of the Scottish Enlightenment. Venetian aristocrats had had centuries of practice analyzing events and reporting them back to the state; it is not surprising that eighteenth-century Venice was a center of Italian journalism. Venetian reformers had wide-ranging interests, including improving agricultural production, and political changes in the aristocratic regime. But habits of individual action, or of combinations, for limited objectives impeded the formation of a broadly based, comprehensive reform movement.

Vincenzo Formaleoni, a geographer and publicist to whom Venturi devotes a chapter, attempted in various ways to inspire renewed interest in international trade. He argued that new opportunities were possible for Venice with Russia and the Black Sea, but he lost patience with Venice's slow pace of reform and imprudently published in 1792 a cynical satire concerning the death of a dog in a café. The references to contemporaries were too obvious and the Inquisition exiled him. In France he found the Terror; his return resulted in his imprisonment in an Austrian prison in Mantua. His story has echoes of the dismal fate of Giannone. "As eighteenth century Venetian painting ended with the pulcinellas of Tiepolo," Venturi writes, "so the editorial enterprise of Formaleoni ended with his canine satire."

Venturi has announced the completion of Part 3, and it should soon appear. In it, he will continue with the old republics of Genoa and Lucca, and there will be sections on Tuscany and Rome as well. The conclusion will be the extremes of Italian reform, Piedmont in the north and Naples in the south.

Venturi's work differs from much contemporary scholarship on the eighteenth century in regarding its subject as European in scope. The national or more local focus of most research continues to produce impressive results, but Venturi would argue that a cosmopolitan perspective informs us that the French Revolution and the issues associated with it were not isolated or unique. He has taken Italy as his starting point, but he has clearly challenged others to produce comparable studies of cosmopolitanism from other national or regional perspectives. Adopting his view means accepting a complex and at times contradictory picture of Enlightenment culture.

Venturi has provided us with important insights in the history of the professionalization of intellectuals and developed a new method for appreciating their achievement and the limitations of their vision. His sympathetic recollection to modern memory of the alert perceptions of so many is a testimony to his celebration of a sensibility that is both European and Italian. It may not be too fanciful to see his work in the local context of Turin, where he has taught and studied for many years, as an act of atonement for Turin's double crime against the Enlightenment: the exile of Radicati and the imprisonment of Giannone. Franco Venturi's work provides much useful and new information that contributes to a more historical and less ideological understanding of the Enlightenment and the crucial era of the French Revolution.

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MEDICINE

Benjamin Rush, Revolutionary Doctor

CHARLES B. STROZIER

The medical profession has never been a haven for social and political activism. In the twentieth century, the intensely scientific nature of medicine and especially the high earnings of the private practitioner have proven powerful incentives for the physician not to rock the boat. Nor was this basically conservative role of the physician in society much different in the nineteenth century. Doctors were respected and politically quiescent members of the communities in which they lived, large or small. This was as true for such cities as New York, Philadelphia, or Chicago as it was for such tiny towns as New Salem, which in the 1830s had two doctors.

Benjamin Rush, however, was quite a different doctor altogether. For him politics and medicine merged inextricably. The human body and the body politic formed a common universe. Science as he knew it suggested radical cures for everything from fevers to indigestion to alcoholism to profound psychosis. Yet Rush, the inveterate tinkerer, boldly embraced rational philosophical thought of the eighteenth century to cure the symptoms of the body politic. The areas where Rush suggested change included: taxation reform; the structure of government, both in Pennsylvania and at the federal level; slavery; the cut of hair for soldiers in battle; public education; the sewage system for Philadelphia; prisons; drinking habits; and on and on and on. Both in and out of medicine he took up a series of causes. He was immensely important in his time, and yet he has generally fallen between the cracks of scholarship. He is always mentioned in the margins of history books: as an important doctor in Philadelphia and as a signer of the Declaration of Independence; for some of his suggested reforms; and as a friend of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and other Founding Fathers.

But, as a doctor, Rush's full treatment is left to those with specialized interest in the history of medicine—other doctors. In that role, he is seldom treated seriously. He had the quack notion that bleeding was appropriate for everything from the yellow fever to mental illness; his tranquilizer chair hardly changed the shape of modern psychiatry; and his 1812 text (which he considered his magnum opus) on the diseases of the mind is a taxonomy of mental illness based largely on common sense, a psychiatry without a psychology.

Rush was thus neither a political leader of much stature nor a scientific thinker of any originality. What he was, however, was wonderfully American—utopian, confident, assertive, bold, progressive, hopeful. He knew no boundaries and disdained constraints on the human soul. A man like Benjamin Rush is inconceivable in the contemporary European context; only America could have nourished such an outrageous and courageous soul.

Benjamin Rush's family background was in the English yeoman farmer class. His great-great-grandfather, John Rush, had fought in the English Puritan army and, after the Civil War, had become a Quaker. In 1683 John

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moved his now large family to Pennsylvania. Several generations later, in 1727, another John Rush, Benjamin's father, inherited the family property near Philadelphia and his own father's trade as a gunsmith. This John was industrious, meek, peace loving. He married an apparently fascinating, independent, and rather fiery woman named Susanna Hall Harvey. Susanna brought into the marriage a daughter from a previous marriage that, in Benjamin Rush's words, had been "terminated in three or four years by the extravagance and intemperance of her young husband." The Rushes settled down on the farm, and with the gunsmith shop, and proceeded to have seven children, of whom Benjamin, the fourth, was born in early 1746. Five years later John died at age thirty-nine, leaving Susanna at age thirty-four with seven young, living children, a farm she could hardly manage on her own, and a trade with which she was unfamiliar.

Susanna acted quickly and decisively: she sold the land, the shop, and one of the two slaves the family owned. With the money from these sales, she moved her family to Philadelphia and purchased a store, called the Blazing Star, above Second Street and near the central market of the city. Here Mrs. Rush sold food and liquor and later added knickknacks and chinaware. Benjamin Rush later commented on his mother's "extraordinary" mind and excellent education. "Her industry and uncommon talents and address to doing business commanded success," he wrote.

In her mid-thirties, Susanna now ran a tavern in downtown Philadelphia. If widowhood was not an uncommon experience for eighteenth-century women, it was indeed remarkable for a woman to run her own business—and a tavern to boot. Her long life (she died in 1793) was to include, later, yet another luckless husband, who died after fourteen years with her. There was spirit in this Susanna, as well as a strong pull toward downward mobility. Both, I suspect, profoundly influenced Benjamin.

Something extraordinary about young Benjamin prompted Susanna to educate him in a manner better suited to the landed gentry than to that of the struggling urban merchant class. When he was eight years old, she sent him to a very respectable boarding school run by Samuel Finley, a Presbyterian minister who was married to one of her sisters. Rush stayed in Finley's school until he was thirteen and a half; he was deeply influenced by this kind and devout man. "His government over his boys," Rush later commented, "was strict but never severe nor arbitrary. It was always by known laws which were plain, and often promulgated."

The goals of education for Samuel Finley were intellectual, moral, and social. Thus Rush noted that Finley "took uncommon pains to promote good manners among his Scholars. The slightest act of incivility was reproved. This he did at his table and in so elegant and delicate a manner as not to expose the person who was rebuked." He taught Latin, Greek, and science in the school but put special emphasis on the reading, writing, and speaking of English. And of course they read the Bible, endlessly it seems by modern standards. Finley filled an important masculine and fatherly void for the young Rush, who extolled the minister's character and manners. All of Finley's pupils, Rush later noted, "admired, esteemed, and loved him."

At age thirteen Rush matriculated at Princeton, where he became immediately and wholeheartedly attached to another father figure, Samuel Davies, the head of the school. For Rush, Davies seemed to have been made for his position. He was, in adjectives Rush himself used, handsome, elegant, commanding, and truly dignified. These words suggest the figure of the man, the outside, the casing, not the man himself. Rush moved at the surface of things. Still, he was a very smart student in a small school, and in his own words attracted a "good deal of his [Davies'] attention."

Princeton was not all roses, however, for while staying there Rush had some specific, upsetting experiences in dorm life. It was probably a homosexual encounter. He later generalized on the evils of dorm life for students: "Vices of the same species," he put it, "attract each other with the most force. Hence the bad consequences of crowding young men (whose propensities are generally the same) under one roof, in our modern plans of education." When he sent his own son, John, to Princeton, he boarded him with a private family because he considered "college life and college society to boys of his age as alike fatal to morals and manners."

At Princeton, Benjamin Rush studied all the

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classical subjects but showed unusual talent for poetry, composition, and public speaking, which prompted his decision, just before graduation in September 1760, to become a lawyer. Susanna supported his choice of career, and Rush even applied to a lawyer in Philadelphia to take him on as an apprentice. Samuel Finley, however, argued strongly with his former pupil (and nephew) that "the practice of law is full of temptations" and that medicine would be more appropriate. "On what slight circumstances do our destinies in life seem to depend," Rush quaintly put it later. Rush scurried back to Davies, got his assent for the change of plan, and secured a letter of recommendation to begin study with John Redman, who was then the leading physician in Philadelphia. Rush had a way of orienting his world to fit his needs.

For the next five years, Rush worked and studied with Redman. At first, he merely mixed the medicines in the apothecary shop, but within a year or so, Redman began taking his promising apprentice on rounds. Rush, now sixteen, threw himself into his studies, reading as he put it, "in the intervals of my business and at late and early hours, all the books in medicine that were put into my hands by my master, or that I could borrow from other students of medicine in the city." He also attended the lectures of William Shippen and John Morgan at the Medical School of Philadelphia. Shippen and Morgan, who were later to figure prominently in Rush's political world, were then the two most important young doctors in town. Both had studied in Edinburgh and were interested in upgrading American medical education by bringing into it the best of contemporary European learning. Shippen and Morgan encouraged their young pupil to pursue further training abroad at their own alma mater, which appealed immensely to Rush.

Once again Susanna concurred in her son's decision and somehow sold enough grog to make it possible. Rush arrived in the early fall of 1766 and spent the next two eventful years absorbing all he could in Britain. One of his first letters shrewdly and brashly let the esteemed Benjamin Franklin, who was then serving in London, know who he was: "Sir," he began, "As I have the happiness of being born in the province where you have resided many years, I was anxious to come under your patronage, as I well know your great love and partiality to the Province of Pennsylvania would readily induce you to favor any one of its natives even though unknown to you." Franklin found the young man appealing in what seems to have been, for Rush, yet another father-son relationship. Franklin later even lent Rush money for a grand tour of the Continent, just before his return to Philadelphia.

Rush's medical training at Edinburgh went smoothly. He threw himself into his work with his customary zeal and, as usual, impressed his teachers. His thesis, written during his second year, was on indigestion. He wanted to show the role acid played. So he ate a large meal, waited a few hours, and puked it all up for analysis. It hardly seems imaginative, besides being a little revolting. But it got the job done—Rush acquired his M.D.

Rush's more intense engagements in this European phase of his life were social. He cultivated himself and his contacts assiduously. At the end of his first academic year, he immediately launched into the study of Spanish and Italian on his own and hired a tutor for French. He bought clothes and sedulously groomed himself for the fine company he began keeping. Through Franklin, Rush had gotten to know Sir Alexander Dick, the president of the Royal Society of Physicians. At Sir Alexander's home he regularly met such people as David Hume, the great philosopher, whom he superficially described as "rather ungenteel and clumsy." Rush also got to know the Earl of Leven, with whose sixteen-year-old daughter, Lady Jane, he promptly fell in love. "What politeness," he wrote of her at the time. "What an address, what an insinuating manner does she possess! The Law of Kindness is written in her heart. Words like honey drop from her tongue. In a word, Heaven is her eye, grace is her look." Nothing ever came of the relationship, but a decade later, when Rush married, he gave his bride a Leven family ring given to him by Lady Jane's brother, neglecting, it seems, to tell his wife of its source.

In 1769, Benjamin Rush returned to Philadelphia, well-trained, cultured, and inordinately ambitious. He was, he told a friend, "resolved to be a great man." Rush moved into an apartment with his younger brother Joseph (who stayed a year), his sister Rebecca (who stayed seven), and a house slave. He kept clear

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of his mother. Rush was almost immediately made a professor of chemistry in the College of Philadelphia; at twenty-three years old he was the youngest faculty member of that school. He was outspoken on everything and seemed to seek out polemics as a way of making himself known and better regarded. He published a recommendation for treating smallpox, for example, that directly opposed the treatment espoused by his colleague William Shippen, his former teacher and mentor. He wrote articles on gout and fevers and the evils of Philadelphia's water supply and any number of medical topics that he knew or thought he knew something about. He carefully sent a copy of everything he wrote to friends in London for republication, which proved a successful tactic in spreading his fame. Within four years of his return to Philadelphia, Benjamin Rush, the doctor, had published more on medical subjects than any other physician in America.

And yet Rush's medical writings were only part of his huge output in these years. In 1772, he wrote a ringing pamphlet that condemned slavery. The black man, he argued, was as good as the white, but slavery had fatally corrupted him. Free the slave, and he would grow to the same moral level as the white man. Rush was enormously proud of this pamphlet and welcomed the uproar it caused. Criticism came from all sides, but no one seemed to care that when he wrote the pamphlet—and for seven years afterward—Rush was himself a slave owner.

In this period just before the Revolution, Rush also extolled patriotism for America in a widely distributed pamphlet and began to delve into the contemporary issues that were increasingly dividing the colonists from Britain. Such involvements put him in touch with a variety of figures, the closest, most important, and enduring of whom was John Adams. These political contacts grew around and largely out of the meetings of the First and Second Continental Congresses, which convened in Philadelphia in 1774 and 1775. He inoculated Patrick Henry against smallpox. He sought out dinner engagements with George Washington. He wrote endless letters to anyone who would bother to read them. He helped Thomas Paine (whom he met accidentally browsing in a bookstore) edit his manuscript, find a publisher, and select a title—*Common Sense*. Rush even became an instant expert on saltpeter, which he knew would be vital for the expected war, and he published a series of essays on its production.

Rush naturally sought recognition for his activity, which he first received as one of the eight newly elected delegates from Pennsylvania to Congress in July 1776. It was in this capacity that he signed the Declaration of Independence the following month. The next year was a crowded one for Rush. Along with attending meetings of Congress, in early 1777 he served as surgeon general for the middle department of the army. Rush had had his eye on the top medical job in the army since January. John Morgan first held that post but was dismissed on January 14. On the same day Rush shot off a letter to Richard Henry Lee in Congress, asking that Lee suspend the decision to replace Morgan until Rush could talk with him.

Even though this politicking failed (Shippen got the job), Rush threw himself into his new post at the second level of medical administration in the army. He encouraged soldiers to cut their hair to keep away lice and help prevent colds during the wet weather. He wanted better food for soldiers, especially fresh vegetables, and he strongly opposed letting the sick get drunk, then a common practice. He furiously fought with the medical administration of the army, questioning the motives and character of William Shippen, his superior. Wherever Rush found inefficiency, injustice, or immorality, he sought change and reform immediately.

More than once during his life, his eagerness for reform got him into trouble, but never did he sink deeper in his own quicksand than when he took on George Washington himself on how to fight a war and manage an army—subjects not generally at the center of the curriculum of most medical schools. In a long letter to John Adams of October 1, 1777, Rush described the deplorable conditions of Washington's army, its disarray, bad management, chaotic defenses, and mass desertions, which he contrasted with the good order of General Howe's army. Rush concluded the comparison with the following nasty summary comments:

I know it is common to blame our subalterns for all these vices. But we must investigate their

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source in the higher departments of the army. A general should see everything with his own eyes and hear everything with his own ears. He should understand and even practice at times all the duties of the soldier, the officer, the quartermaster, the commissary, and the adjutant general. He should be modest, sober, and temperate, free from prejudice. He should despise ease and, like Charles XII, should always sleep in his boots; that is, he should always be ready for a flight or a pursuit.

The present management of our army would depopulate America if men grew among us as speedily and spontaneously as blades of grass.

By 1783, however, the public and political part of Rush's life was largely over. He had gotten into politics and the Revolution partly by accident—and largely because he lived in Philadelphia. So outgoing, flamboyant a personality as Rush's could not allow activity to swirl around him without being a part of it. But he was also changing intellectually and developing new medical interests. Characteristically, Rush formulated his shifting interests in the broadest of philosophical terms. He came to speak of a parallel between the "old principles in medicine" and the elitist and undemocratic European political system, both of which were crumbling. In the 1770s, he sought new ideas about how the body works, and he developed a new interest in treating the insane, which has led to his being thought the father of American psychiatry. In the early part of his career, the physician spilled over into the revolutionary; after about 1780, as a doctor in private practice, the revolutionary character of Rush's personality shaped his medical career.

When Rush first returned from Europe, he was determined not to marry until he was well established. True to his word—and apparently celibate while he waited—Rush only let himself fall in love in the fall of 1775. The object of his love was a sixteen-year-old girl (as earlier he had fallen in love with the sixteen-year-old Lady Jane), Julia Stockton, who was the daughter of a prominent New Jersey lawyer living near Princeton.

Rush's courtship of Julia during the fall of 1775 was less than heated. "I should be wanting in gratitude," Rush wrote Julia on October 25, "if I neglected to inform you that I daily experience the good effects of my attachments to you upon my temper and conduct in my business." In courtship, as in all else, Rush tended toward the bombastic: "There are only two ways of being happy in matrimony," he wrote her November 12, "viz by living agreeable to the laws of religion, or reason. The most sublime and just definition that can be given of a human creature is that he is a being capable of religion."

Rush carefully planned Julia's intellectual life after marriage. He built special bookshelves in his house, which he stocked with more than one hundred volumes of books divided into four categories: religion, history, moral and miscellaneous pieces, and poetry.

For a man noted for his impetuousness in public, Rush exercised huge control over his personal life and emotional attachments. Female education, in his view, was to consist of the practical arts—that is, needlework—some literature, and the Bible. Women, it seemed, were to be quite studiously prepared to all that Benjamin Rush's mother was not. Furthermore, the education of women was tied to his theories about the uniqueness of female physiology. In his lectures at the medical school, for example, he opined that, "The texture of their [women's] simple solids, particularly their bones, is less compact, than the bones of men. This is so notorious, that the bones of a female skeleton may be known from the bones of a male, by certain sulci or furrows, which the arteries that lie near them imprint upon the yielding substance of the bones." It's all of a piece when you read his advice to Rebecca Smith in May 1792. "The subordination of your sex to ours," he said then, "is enforced by nature, by reason and by revelation."

In January 1776, the thirty-year-old Rush married the sixteen-year-old Julia. For all the deliberateness of the courtship, Rush soon fell quite genuinely in love with his young wife. He seemed able to discard his mask with her, and maybe only with her alone. His statements of love after his marriage suggest real feelings. For example, in July 1776—that is, some seven months after the marriage—he wrote her imploringly to return from her parents' home where she was spending a few months to escape the heat and disease of a Philadelphia summer (she was pregnant). "I wish you would return," he told her. "I cannot support the burden of public or private business which now lays upon my shoulders with-

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out you. . . . Do come home as soon as possible, or I tremble at the consequences. I languish for want of company. . . . God bless you! How I long to tell you how much I love you!" The intense passion waned over time, but in the three and a half decades of their marriage, Benjamin Rush wrote Julia nearly every day during any separation between them.

Hundreds of Rush's letters have survived. The main reason we know so much about the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia in 1793 is that Rush chronicled it in his letters to Julia. The context of those letters is remarkable. Thousands lay dead in the city, and Rush was virtually alone among his colleagues to stay and treat patients. After two months of the plague, his mother, sister, and several apprentices were dead in his house. He himself was sick with the fever, for which, true to his *idée fixe,* he had bled himself of a quart of blood. And yet still he managed to drag himself to the desk and write every day to his wife.

Julia had thirteen children. Nine lived to maturity, creating something of a nineteenth-century clan that rivaled the Adams's. Rush loved the bustle of a household of children, and the chaos never interfered with his ability to write or work. Somehow Julia maneuvered around his fussiness, which remained permanently in place. In 1790, for example, Rush pontificated about the evils of tobacco, which he condemned as unclean, and he actually concluded: "Uncleanliness has been proven to be unfriendly to morals."

Rush doted on all his children, but his deepest and most complex emotional attachment was to the eldest, John. He was always favored, and in some ways Rush constructed family life around John. "Where the eldest son or daughter is honored and preferred by parents," Rush wrote in 1789, "a family is never without government in the absence of parents from home, and when these parents are removed by death there is a foundation laid in the habits of the younger children for a continuance of subordination in a family." As an adult, John became incurably insane. No one knows what makes people mad, and it would be both ungenerous and hasty to blame Rush for his son's mental illness. Rush was inordinately involved in his son's upbringing and seemed to sense very early that something was terribly wrong. He altered his life and professional concerns in large part to understand, express, and treat John's madness. American psychiatry is rooted in the relationship between Benjamin Rush and his son.

We know little of the earliest interaction between father and son. There is a chilling aside in an enthusiastic essay on bleeding that Rush wrote in 1807. In that essay he noted that he had bled his own children frequently, including "one of his sons" at less than two months old. There is also a reference to John in the middle of a typically bombastic letter Rush wrote to Enos Hitchcock on April 29, 1789, in which he described his two great discoveries about child rearing. One was the effectiveness of solitude over corporal punishment. "I have used it for many years in my family," Rush wrote, "with the greatest success. My eldest son, who is now near twelve years old, has more than once begged me to flog him in preference to confining him. The duration of the confinement and the disagreeable circumstances that are connected with it are proportional to the faults that are committed. I have in one instance confined my two eldest sons in separate rooms for two days."

When John was just nine, Rush began taking him on medical rounds to the Pennsylvania Hospital. Rush wanted John to be a doctor, and presumably this early exposure would stimulate his interest. "This morning," Rush reported to Julia,

> he [John] went with me into the cell of a young woman once handsome and of a respectable family. She was chained to the floor. Upon seeing a potato in John's hand which the steward of the Hospital had given him, she asked him for it and accompanied her request with tears. John advanced at once and gave it to her. She instantly filled her mouth with the whole of it, and for half a minute it seemed as if it would have choked her. John viewed her as if he had been petrified. But he soon recovered his speech after we had got into the chair.

John then asked his father a long series of questions about madness and wanted particularly to know whether people died from it.

At sixteen years old, John Rush went away briefly to Princeton. In his first week away from home and his father, John and three other boys played cards on Sunday evening. They got caught, and the self-righteous Princeton faculty demanded that the boys read a public confession before the assembled

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college. The other boys carried out this punishment, and life returned to normal for them. For John, however, it had a sadder end. Rush immediately and permanently withdrew John from Princeton and wrote of his "great distress" and the "public disgrace" caused by his son. As Rush viewed it, John was doomed. He could "never recover his character" or get over the "depravity of his mind."

Rush brought his son home and apprenticed him in medicine under his own watchful eye. When John left home at twenty (to serve aboard ship as a surgeon), Rush wrote him detailed instructions for behavior that have all the hot air of Polonius's speech to Laertes. The instructions cover morals ("Be punctual in committing your soul and body to the protection of your Creator every morning and evening"; "Be courteous and gentle in your behavior"); knowledge ("Keep a diary of every day's studies, conversations, and transactions at sea and on shore"; "Preserve an account of every person's name and disease whom you attend"); health ("Be temperate in eating"; "Avoid the night air in sickly situations"); and business ("Take no step in laying out your money without the advice and consent of the captain or supercargo").

In conclusion, Rush noted: "Whenever you are tempted to do an improper thing, fancy that you see your father and mother kneeling before you and imploring you with tears in their eyes to refrain from yielding to the temptation, and assuring you at the same time that your yielding to it will be the means of hurrying them to a premature grave." Eleven years later—in 1807—John killed a former friend in a duel, after which he became mute and once attempted suicide. He was initially confined in a New Orleans hospital before returning home in 1809, with uncombed hair and long nails, to become a permanent resident of his father's own hospital, where he was bled by his father in the famous tranquilizing chair.

Julia Rush later characterized her husband as most resembling Martin Luther—an interesting comparison. In her judgment both were ardent, fearless, and hasty. Rush himself always stressed how hard he tried to do well. It is almost a regular plaint in his letters. In fact, he did do well, if not so well as he hoped for himself or as well as he thought he had done. He was active in politics and contributed to the course of the American Revolution, though as a minor player. He reformed aspects of public life, but never in the way of such central figures as Benjamin Franklin, or Thomas Jefferson, or even his friend John Adams. In medicine itself, his contributions were voluminous but either quickly forgotten or luckily surpassed (especially his absurd recommendations about bleeding). And yet he retains his place in history. He had energy, ideas, and passionate commitments—and, for all his faults, personal and political, he was an estimable American character.

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Old Man with a Beach Ball

ARTHUR PURDY

The old man comes to the lake.
Among tall pines he's bent

And shuffles in dry needles. His open mouth
Sucks air from flames of sun.

Eyeing the glazing heat
His head turtles on its cracked neck.

Shrunken in his clothes are memories
Of straighter shoulders, surer legs.

Starved ghosts of embracing arms
Hang from knotty joints in a drought

Where the world's gone young.
Where flashing legs and bright skin,

Eager for immersion, desert him.
He follows. He finds his shade

Just off the beach. A hand in spasm
With hard pulsing of his heart

Claws a pocket, wipes unsteadily
The effort of belonging from his brow.

The unconscious other hand only shapes
Strong grip on the bright crescents

Of inflated color. He waits, clutching
Their ball, those swimmers playing in the sun.

✪ ARTHUR PURDY is a retired businessman.

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Down in the Valley

David Lilienthal's *TVA: Democracy on the March*

HOWARD SEGAL

To those living beyond its borders, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is rarely in the news these days, and when it is, the story is usually grim. Controversies over ceaseless strip mining, endangered snail darters, unfinished or closed nuclear power plants, and ever-rising electrical rates have plagued TVA in recent years. They have virtually precluded any positive publicity. For most Americans outside its purview (and for not a few within it), TVA is just another bloated government bureaucracy whose original promise and purpose have been lost and perhaps forgotten.

Such was certainly not the case fifty-one years ago, when David Lilienthal's *TVA: Democracy on the March* first appeared. In 1944, TVA was at the peak of its domestic popularity, and Lilienthal's work seized on that opportunity to promote both the agency and himself. At the time, Lilienthal was chairman of the TVA board of directors, a position he had held since 1941 and retained until 1946, when President Truman appointed him the first chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. So popular was his book that Lilienthal was thereafter identified in the public mind as Mr. TVA. When he died at age eighty-one in 1981, the *New York Times* ran his obituary on its front page and praised him on its editorial page as "A Special Citizen" more responsible than anyone else for making TVA work. Other major newspapers and news magazines carried similar tributes.

As Lilienthal readily conceded in the book, TVA had been highly controversial ever since its creation by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in May 1933 as one of the New Deal's first major actions. At one level TVA culminated and justified decades of struggle by Nebraska Senator George Norris to utilize for public rather than private purposes the hydroelectric power of the huge dam at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, the Tennessee River's foremost waterpower site. As conceived by Roosevelt and others, however, TVA became the model for regional planning and economic and social uplift for the entire country and, in due course, much of the world. No other New Deal agency was as widely praised in the 1930s and 1940s or as emulated abroad as the TVA. Yet from the start the very legitimacy of TVA was challenged: first, by the valley's private utilities whose profitable monopoly on electric power was threatened; and, second, by political and economic conservatives who associated TVA with socialism or worse.

What also plagued TVA from its inception was the almost unceasing conflict among the original three members of its board of directors: Arthur Morgan, the chairman; Harcourt Morgan (no relation); and Lilienthal himself. Arthur Morgan, a distinguished flood-control engineer who was president of Antioch College when called to TVA service, envisioned social and moral reconstruction as much as conventional engineering. But Harcourt Morgan and Lilienthal—one a low-key specialist in agricultural resource management, the other an ambitious public utilities lawyer and regulator—had narrower objectives, primarily power production. Gradually the latter two prevailed, and electricity "too cheap to meter" became TVA's hallmark for decades.

Fired by President Roosevelt in 1938 after failing to document repeated public charges that his fellow directors were guilty of malfea-

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sance and lack of integrity, chairman Morgan returned to Yellow Springs, Ohio, and left the public stage. His significant technical and planning achievements, even in the face of Harcourt Morgan and Lilienthal's opposition, were largely ignored. His death in 1975 at age ninety-seven generated a much smaller *New York Times* obituary than Lilienthal's and no editorial, with barely a mention, if any, in other leading newspapers and news magazines.

TVA purposely omits not only Arthur Morgan's achievements but his very name. By 1944, Lilienthal was so prominently associated with TVA that he had little to fear in neglecting his old rival. As Lilienthal in fact confessed in his preface, "This book does not purport to be a full account of TVA. Except by way of the briefest inventory, I have not described the engineering and technical aspects of that enterprise." More curious was the failure of all but a handful of the book's generally laudatory reviewers to notice Arthur Morgan's absence; not surprisingly, those who did notice were themselves engineers writing in engineering journals.

Still, although Lilienthal had become adept at polishing his public image long before *TVA* appeared, the book did more than all of his many previous press releases, speeches, interviews, and newspaper and magazine articles to establish his supremacy in the pantheon of TVA founders. That Lilienthal repeatedly described himself as a humble professional public servant who had written the book in whatever spare time he could find while running TVA only reinforced that favorable public image.

One should not minimize the book's popularity. In correspondence with friends and publishers Lilienthal wrote of perhaps reaching a broad audience, but its eventual size dwarfed his grandest expectations. *TVA* sold thousands of copies in its original hardcover edition, sold tens of thousands more in an inexpensive Pocket Books edition distributed to America's fighting forces in 1944 and 1945, was translated into at least ten foreign languages, and sold yet more copies when reprinted in 1953 in an edition commemorating TVA's twentieth anniversary.

Timing clearly had much to do with the popularity of Lilienthal's work. Numerous other laudatory books on TVA had already been published by 1944, and *TVA* is a more serious and more detailed work than most of them. World War II, however, spurred readership even as it ironically pushed TVA ever further away from its original multipurpose mission toward power production only for wartime needs. By the end of the war, TVA had become the nation's largest electric utility.

First and foremost, the book's emphasis on its subtitle, *Democracy on the March*, naturally appealed to a nation then fighting for democracy's very existence. If Lilienthal's portrayal of TVA as embodying "grass-roots democracy" was at best a half-truth, it nevertheless reinforced the public conviction that democracy in America was working well and so was well worth defending. Both those marching off to war and those left behind could take heart from TVA's example.

Equally important, at a time when so much of the rest of the world was being destroyed, Lilienthal demonstrated that Americans were in control of their environment and were capable of one of history's most impressive physical engineering projects. Nearly thirty dams had by then been constructed through a forty-thousand-square-mile watershed encompassing all or part of seven states. Insofar as the TVA in 1944 was usually associated with environmental protection and enhancement rather than, as later, with their antitheses, TVA's titanic efforts to tame raw nature could be celebrated in the same manner in which Americans traditionally celebrated other conquests.

Lilienthal held out the hope that Americans might "learn to work in harmony with the forces of nature, neither despoiling what God has given nor helpless to put them to use." He incorporated the vague notion of a "common mooring," which was long articulated by Harcourt Morgan to espouse the common unity of river, land, and people (and their management!) in the TVA and any progeny. The titles of several of Lilienthal's twenty chapters reflect that worldview: "A Seamless Web," "The Common Purpose," "New Life from the Land," and "The People's Dividend." So ecologically sensitive a vision as this was unusual for the period, particularly for someone outside the ranks of the nation's conservation movement. But Lilienthal's rhetoric had another purpose: he wanted to bolster his more technical explanation of TVA's uniqueness as the first federal agency to be solely responsible for any project involving an entire river system, from land purchase to dam construction to power trans-

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mission and sale. Various tasks would not be assigned to half a dozen or more separate bureaucracies.

More generally, Lilienthal made a compelling case for the peaceful purposes of modern technology precisely when it was being used for obviously negative purposes abroad. "I believe in the great potentialities for well-being of the machine and technology and science," he wrote; "though they do hold a real threat of enslavement and frustration for the human spirit, I believe those dangers can be averted." Lilienthal repeatedly invoked the upbeat "Machine Age" references and metaphors so popular in the 1930s and early 1940s. Although not a technological determinist, he praised electricity, in tones characteristic of the day, as a liberating and democratic force: every kilowatt-hour of electricity "is a modern slave, working tirelessly for men."

Even in the absence of a world war, *TVA* would have exerted widespread appeal. In the face of the nation's greatest depression and the substantial loss of faith in government, Lilienthal contended that government at all levels still worked, that the federal government had not lost touch with state and local governments, that ordinary citizens maintained a strong voice in decision making, and that government bureaucrats continued to respect their opinions and their desires. As Lilienthal put it throughout the book, TVA embodied the "decentralized administration of centralized authority." Administration, he claimed, was separate from authority, and wherever possible administration should be spread out among the affected citizenry. This was the supposed real meaning of "grass-roots democracy." Like so many other students of American society, Lilienthal cited the first volume of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* to strengthen his case.

Yet some critics deemed TVA an example of a new managerial ruling class in America that was strikingly similar to those in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. In 1941, James Burnham made these allegations in his book *Managerial Revolution.* Lilienthal, who had already reviewed that popular book and found it wanting, vigorously disputed Burnham in *TVA.* Lilienthal had probably never read the second volume of *Democracy in America* with its own pessimistic portrayal of bureaucratic despotism and surely would not have mentioned it in *TVA* if he had. Instead, he lauded TVA's non-partisan employee-hiring program, which operated separately from the mainstream federal civil service; its complementary disavowal of political patronage; and its exceptional degree of accountability to Congress.

If, to use an analogy Lilienthal might have endorsed, the fictional Senator Smith in Frank Capra's 1939 film, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,* had brought traditional American values to Washington, then TVA experts brought a similar integrity cum Capra-corn back to the valley: those experts "who live with the people should be the ablest men, not the weakest—not those left over after the needs of . . . headquarters in Washington or New York are cared for." The famous motto inscribed in every TVA dam, "Built for the People of the United States," reflected this spirit. The fact that, as scholars have by now detailed, TVA's employment and development policies discriminated against the region's black citizens, at least as much as those of other government agencies did, was conveniently overlooked. Ironically, the decentralized administration hailed by Lilienthal worked against those whose grassroots power was minimal.

Lilienthal was careful not to disavow politics altogether. His book lavished praise on Franklin Roosevelt, his foremost patron and protector; on former Senator Norris, defeated for re-election two years earlier; and on the Congress, whose appropriations would sustain or destroy TVA. "More hazardous to democracy than . . . a dream of a ruling elite of managers and technicians," he argued, "is a growing contempt of 'politics' and of Congress." But Lilienthal's disavowal in the book of partisan politics was itself a shrewd political posture, temporarily insulating TVA and himself from otherwise persistent attacks by politicians, businessmen, and others who were indeed generally unable to obtain positions for their friends, their families, or themselves. Yet Lilienthal simultaneously praised valley businessmen—and unions—for their eventual support of TVA.

TVA also made a strong case for democratic planning, then as now a controversial topic for Americans when applied to the public realm. Although Englishman Julian Huxley subtitled his glowing account of TVA *Adventure in Planning* (1943), Lilienthal knew his American

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constituency required a harder sell. His undocumented contention that systematic economic and social planning in America was actually "as old as the Republic" was therefore a halfhearted attempt to alleviate anxieties about TVA's comprehensive mission.

What especially haunted Lilienthal, however, was the common vision of authoritarian gray-suited technocrats, much less brownshirted fascists, making everything run on time for questionable purposes. By urging a "minimum of coercion" in TVA planning, and by greatly exaggerating the harmony among TVA's constituents as well as that within the agency itself, Lilienthal made public planning a less threatening and potentially attractive proposition. He offered evidence that successful planning could derive from local grassroots consensus rather than from distant, top-down decrees. And that, in turn, inspired hope that local planning could complement planning for larger geographical areas, including the entire nation. Simply omitted, like TVA's covert racism, was the reality that those most affected were often those most ignored, beginning with the forced removal of thirty-five hundred families to make way for Norris Dam, TVA's first major project. Instead, Lilienthal frequently portrayed the formulation and implementation of grassroots policies as a latter-day version of Jeffersonian democracy.

In 1949, Philip Selznick, a young UCLA sociologist who had done fieldwork at TVA a few years earlier, published *TVA and the Grass Roots*, a powerful and influential critique of Lilienthal's work. Selznick's book showed the pervasiveness, not of participatory democracy, but of what Selznick called "cooptation." Applying Robert Michels's "Iron Law of Oligarchy" to this allegedly most democratic of federal bureaucracies, Selznick described TVA's grassroots rhetoric as a highly effective ideological weapon concealing a starkly different reality. Selznick emphasized the deliberate surrender of TVA's agricultural assistance program to powerful and conservative interests hostile to the poor white and black farmers that the agency was supposedly most eager to help. Those agricultural interests then helped protect TVA from private utilities, political patronage machines, and other genuine enemies, but at enormous cost to TVA's much-vaunted integrity. *TVA* had itself said that there should nowhere be "a mere false front, using the outward form of voluntary and educational methods to disguise actual coercion."

Lilienthal had far fewer problems in making a case for regionalism. By 1944 regionalism was a popular concept, above all in the South, where Howard Odum and associates at the University of North Carolina produced a stream of studies redefining the United States as a nation of clearly distinct regions rather than two or three vague sections. TVA could thereby be promoted as a practical response to what prominent social scientists had identified as a "natural region," not an artificial construct devised by the federal government or, for that matter, the affected states.

Beyond these sources of popularity, *TVA* appealed to many as a virtual religious tract, a paean to democracy. "What I have set down in this book is a statement of my faith," Lilienthal wrote in his preface. He thereby cleverly—and, on the whole, sincerely—tapped into what has since been termed America's civic religion of progress. If TVA came under the same divine plan as the rest of American history, who could deny its legitimacy, much less its destiny?

Lilienthal also connected TVA to secular utopian visions that had flourished throughout American history. "This is a book about tomorrow," he began. "My purpose in writing it is to try to cut through the fog of uncertainty and confusion about tomorrow that envelops us." Like many other serious American visionaries, whether writers or communitarians, Lilienthal resisted being labeled utopian lest his credibility automatically be questioned by proudly practical citizens. TVA was "no utopian Brook Farm experiment; no endeavor to escape into a simpler past or a more romantic future"—an implicit criticism of Arthur Morgan's semi-utopian, small-scale community vision. The last chapter of *TVA* was entitled, appropriately, "It Can Be Done: Dreamers with Shovels."

Finally, *TVA* suggested to a nation exhausted by both depression and war that this regional democratic experiment could be reproduced not just elsewhere in America but throughout the postwar world. In this one respect the book *was* "about tomorrow." That prospect inevitably wooed many readers, and it is not surprising that Lilienthal's 1953 revised edition had as its single new chapter "The TVA Idea Abroad," for which he found many examples. The fact that TVA had not

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been tried again in the United States troubled him greatly. But his 1953 preface rationalized it as the almost inevitable result of TVA's very success, as reflecting the fears within such federal agencies as the Departments of Agriculture and Interior and the Army Corps of Engineers that additional TVA-like projects would diminish their power and prestige.

Lilienthal's own subsequent adventures abroad eventually soured him on the ready export of TVA ideals and practices. The Development and Resources Corporation that he formed in 1955 with several former TVA associates operated for more than two decades in more than twenty-five countries with generally mixed results. The undemocratic governments for whom it primarily worked often proved unstable and unreliable and thus poor investments. The corporation went bankrupt in 1979 when the Shah of Iran was deposed and the new revolutionary government refused to reimburse it for the development projects that by then accounted for nearly all the company's profits. Lilienthal's repeated failure to pay more than lip service to grassroots democracy in nations where ruling elites did not necessarily represent or care about public opinion came back to haunt him in Iran and elsewhere.

Lilienthal's enterprise was a conspicuous victim of the contemporary reaction against the ideology of "modernization" that he and so many other Western businessmen, government officials, and academics promoted and practiced in the postwar era. Although the 1953 revised edition of *TVA* barely mentioned the Soviet Union, its fervent advocacy of the TVA idea abroad was spurred in part by Cold War anxieties over the political and economic fates of dying colonial empires around the world and by the need to offer appealing models of Western capitalist development to the emerging independent nations that replaced them.

The condemnation of the TVA ethos by the Iranian regime in 1979 mirrored that provided by Donald Davidson in his 1948 classic, *The Tennessee.* Volume 2, *The New River: Civil War to TVA.* Davidson was a professor of English at Vanderbilt University and among the most conservative of the twelve southern agrarians who authored *I'll Take My Stand* (1930)—not all of whom opposed TVA, contrary to conventional wisdom. Davidson singled out Lilienthal and *TVA* for special scorn. He associated TVA with the destruction of rich soil and rich traditions, the uprooting of local inhabitants and their historic communities and values, the generation of greed and exploitation along with electric power, and the replacement of a major river with a southern chain of Great Lakes—in short, with "progress." Davidson wrote: "Mr. Lilienthal was urbane and friendly. He could explain everything down to the last acre-foot, ton-mile, and kilowatt-hour, and was not bashful about doing so." *TVA* "gathered up all his explanations and restated them with his usual success. Reading it, you were bound to feel that everything was hunkydory in the Tennessee Valley." However, even those valley residents who had prospered with TVA and so supported it, Davidson concluded, had paid a far greater price in their loss of independence than any of them recognized.

Lilienthal himself anticipated these potential costs of modernization in his otherwise fundamentally optimistic book. If, he wrote, the price of technological progress were "exhausted land, butchered forests, polluted streams, and industrial ugliness," it would have been too high. And "if the people are denied an active part in this great task, then they may be poor or they may be prosperous but they will not be free." As with other qualifications of his vision, Lilienthal foresaw little prospect for such unpleasantness.

A half-century after *TVA* first appeared, it is painful but instructive to ponder the real legacy of this once-famous book. To quote Lilienthal's own original preface against him, we must belatedly "*see the reality behind the words.*" *TVA* was a powerful political and ideological weapon that simultaneously shielded the agency from many of its enemies and projected a veritable utopian vision of grassroots democracy and bureaucratic efficiency that could never be realized. The true believers to whom Lilienthal preached inevitably became disillusioned. Lilienthal's own extraordinary mixture of genuine conviction and calculated idealism did not allow for this predicament, and when that disillusionment surfaced, Lilienthal had already left public service and did not feel obliged to address it. When, however, the fate of TVA is being called by some a "defining moment" for high-tech administrative schemes at the grassroots level, it might be useful to reread *TVA* as a cautionary tale.

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MEMOIR

Camus's Hug

PHILIP HALLIE

In front of me now is one of those French paperbacks that come covered with cellophane. The cellophane has turned speckled brown, but it has kept the cardboard cover of the book itself creamy white for more than thirty years. The little book contains two talks that Albert Camus gave in Stockholm in December of 1957 when he received the Nobel Prize for literature. Camus gave it to me after we had been talking for almost two hours in his office on the top floor of his publisher's building in Paris. At the end of our talk, he wrote some polite words on the inside title page: "To Monsieur Philip Hallie, with all good wishes for his work and for our shared hopes, very cordially, Albert Camus." While he was writing, he said, to himself as much as to me, "Words. Well, not much, but . . . here."

Still, the words he wrote were a summary of our last two hours together and of our brief friendship. It was one of Camus's deepest convictions that language must be lean—if it would not lie. Lying for him was not so much saying what is false as it was adding to what is true. You are lying when you say you care and you do not. You are truing if you are staying close to the "*vérité charnelle*," the flesh-and-bone details of how you yourself see and feel and act. He meant what he wrote.

The conversation was about our *espoirs communs*, our shared hopes; we both wanted to write and to speak truly, and lately we had been having trouble doing it. For both of us, it was hard to speak from the heart and still make sense to other people. It was late in the spring of 1959, and he was adapting novels to the stage instead of speaking straight from his own anguish and his own sensualism; I was writing about Michel de Montaigne, a sixteenth-century Frenchman who wrote personal essays that expressed his feelings and thoughts, many of them not mine. Albert Camus was a great man, I was a young philosophy student from America, but we both needed to write, and we warmed to each other.

The first time I ever laid eyes on the person of Albert Camus was over the heads of hundreds of students at a matinee in Paris's Théâtre Antoine. Camus had adapted Dostoyevsky's novel *The Possessed* for the stage, and at this performance of the play, the theater was full of young people who belonged to a group called *La Jeunesse Musicale*. My wife and I had joined the group so that we could go with them to see in person the leading artists of France. A few weeks before, we had seen and heard Francis Poulenc in action, looking and moving like a majestic bank president, playing some of his piano pieces, and telling us that there was no such thing as religious music: there was just music to which we attached religious words and feelings. Now Camus was going to talk with us about his stage adaptation of Dostoyevsky's novel about some Russian political fanatics.

The play centers around a rich, handsome, would-be revolutionary named Nicholas Stavrogin who wants to bring a sick Russia to health by bloodletting—by killing people. In the end, he all but destroys everybody he touches and then hangs himself. In the theater when the last curtain fell on his suicide, there was silence for a few seconds, then a short burst of applause from the young audience, and finally a desultory tapering down. Apparently the long play had exhausted more than exhilarated the audience.

Before the applause ended, a lithe, dark man leaped up on the stage, without using the

✪ PHILIP HALLIE, who died in August 1994, was the Griffin Professor of Philosophy and Humanities Emeritus at Wesleyan University. He is the author of *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*.

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steps, and then he raised his arms, with a wistful smile on his face. It was Albert Camus, the man many of us thought of as one of the few good men in a broken world, a lay saint. Oh, those of us who had read everything we could get our hands on by and about him knew that he and the world around him were in agony. He was born and raised in Algeria, and he was a descendant of Europeans, both genetically and culturally. Ever since the early nineteenth century, Algeria had been a possession, even a "prolongation" (as some put it) of continental France. But now, in the middle of the twentieth century, there was a powerful drive in Algeria for independence. The Berbers and Arabs—more than nine million of them—were in the center of a struggle to achieve independence from the mainland; and the European French citizens of Algeria—more than a million of them—were involved in that struggle. His early work as a writer had been as a journalist for the *Alger-Républicain*, a daily publication that was very critical of French rule in Algeria. Camus's early writings consisted of reports on the desperate living conditions of Arabs in Algeria, and in fact he was the only French journalist ever forced to leave Algeria because he sided with the Muslims. In 1956 when the Algerian drive for independence was becoming very strong, he went back to Algeria in the hope of reconciling Muslims and Europeans; but his irenic message about "French and Arabs associating freely" sounded like the old colonialism to the Muslims and looked like surrender to the Europeans.

On a larger stage, the Communist left saw him as too far right; and the right saw him as too far left. When he spoke up politically, he was attacked left and right; and when he was silent, he was accused of complicity with the rightist Europeans.

I saw him as a moralist, not a political figure, someone who was deeply suspicious of political abstractions like "right," "left," "colonialist," and "anti-colonialist." He was convinced that murder was what the bitterly contending parties were out to legitimize, whatever high-flown clichés they used. The "*vérité charnelle*," the flesh-and-bone truth, was that particular people kill and suffer, and political polarities can make us cruelly indifferent to this truth.

Two years before the performance at the Antoine, he had received the Nobel Prize for literature, the youngest Nobel laureate in literature since Rudyard Kipling. At 5:30 in the evening of December 12, 1957, in Stockholm, just after he received the prize, he participated in a painful question and answer session at Stockholm University. He told an angry Muslim interrogator that he denounced murder in all its forms and that "terrorism . . . in the streets of Algiers, for example . . . could strike my mother or my family. I believe in justice, but I shall defend my mother above justice."

Imagine how the saviors of the world took that! Suddenly the people in that university room were dealing not with saving the world from Injustice, but merely with saving a few paltry particular persons from murder!

Personal candor happens rather infrequently in political argumentation or in any other kind of abstract reasoning. When it happens, it is like having your spade suddenly turned by bedrock while you are in the process of digging a great hole for a great foundation that would support some great building. In the angry exchange with the Muslim in Stockholm, Camus is said to have turned pale, but though there was pathos in what he said about his mother and justice, there was also a simple truth: his mother was more valuable to him than any political abstractions could ever be. He was not only uttering a cry from the heart; he was also stating an un-get-over-able fact.

And it was a statement of fact that had a great tradition behind it. In the sixteenth century, during the bitterly cruel religious wars between Protestants and Catholics in France, Michel de Montaigne had made an art of avoiding abstract theological arguments and insisting on concrete, personal facts that no one could dispute. When someone asked Montaigne *why* he was a Catholic and not a Protestant, he would not spout arguable abstractions about transubstantiation or authority; he would say: "I am a Catholic because of human ties, because of how I was born and raised. I am a Catholic by the same title that I am a Frenchman." He preferred plain, ascertainable facts to great abstractions.

Sixteenth-century religious zealots hating and killing in the name of Christian love would not be moved by such facts; and twentieth-century political zealots legitimizing mass murder in the name of Justice would not be moved either. But unlike the zealots, Mon-

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taigne and Camus were not trying to coerce anybody into believing in some great cause; they were trying only to remind people that, no matter how high our abstract principles may fly, the flesh-and-bone individuals who utter these principles count, and count heavily. Human ties matter the way the heart in my body matters now. We add too much to palpable facts; we lie about them when we do not face them squarely.

Knowing all this—and especially knowing that for him legitimized murder was the great plague of mankind and his only bitterly hated enemy—people like me in the audience at the Antoine and elsewhere in the world loved and admired him in his agony. He was revolting against violence in a very violent world, and revolting against it valiantly, though pathetically. And valor and pathos were essential to what he meant by one of his key expressions: "*l'homme révolté,*" "the rebel."

Anyway, he was utterly at home on the stage of the Antoine, and he seemed happy to be with all these young people. I had been told that he always became youthful with young people near him. When the applause ended, he asked for questions or statements from his audience. There was a silence that seemed to go on and on. Then to my wife's surprise, I jumped up from my seat at the back of the hall and asked: "What happens in Stavrogin's mind between the time when he hates and wants to destroy every person on earth and the time when he dreams about two islands, one full of innocent and happy people and the other full of evil? How does he move from being a nihilistic killer to being a passionate moralist?"

I thought I heard some tittering in the audience of teenagers at my American accent, but before I could get embarrassed enough to wish that I had stayed silent in my seat, Camus ran across the front of the stage in order to look straight at me, and with that long face of his that looked a little like the face of the great comedian Fernandel, he pushed his upper body over the footlights, and said, "When Stavrogin wanted to have everybody murdered, he was thinking in political abstractions. But he raped twelve-year-old little Matriocha, and then he let her hang herself so that their secret would die with her. Now he was living in the flesh-and-bone world of his own deeds. Be mortally cruel to a child, and you will learn the difference between innocence and evil. You don't find ethics in political words."

"*Ça va?*" he called out at me, still pushing his face over the footlights.

I called back, "*Oui, merci! Mais. . . .*"

Then he called out, "Come to my office at Gallimard Thursday afternoon about four o'clock, and we'll talk."

And so began my brief friendship with Albert Camus. I had read his plays, stories, and essays from beginning to end, and I had published an essay of my own on him in the early fifties; but now I was meeting him in a different world, a world of people who smell each other's breath and touch each other's flesh. I felt out of my depth, and I was trembling when I sat down, though I had not trembled while I was asking my question about Stavrogin. This man was so . . . so physical!

Thursday was a very warm, late-spring day, and by the time I had gotten to the top of the winding staircase that ended at Camus's office at Gallimard Publishing House, I was wiping sweat from my forehead. His door was wide open, but I could not see him. I called out, "Monsieur Camus?" There was a brief commotion, and suddenly he stood before me with a half-inward smile and his right hand out. Even though he was about my height, somehow I could not look straight into his eyes. I found that my attention was caught by his gray denim shirt, open at the collar with no tie. We shook hands, and then he touched my left shoulder and gently directed me to my right. I sat down in a chair next to his desk, just a few inches away from where he sat behind his desk.

On an impulse that afternoon I had brought with me an envelope full of photographs I had taken a few months before during a month in Russia. They were mainly pictures of young people in the streets of Moscow and Kiev, and I knew of his concern for children in a surly world.

As I reached into my jacket pocket to pull the envelope out, he leaned toward me with that long face and said, "What have you got there?" I told him. He leaned back in his chair, motioned me to leave the envelope in my pocket, and said, "No. Please. I do not want to look at them. The government authorizes murder there."

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I must have blushed; I certainly felt ashamed: I should have known that Camus was far from being a friend of Russian Communism. I should have known that for him Russian Communism was propelled by what he once called "a brutal desire for justice." Communism, and every doctrine like it, put public rancor above personal love.

I let the envelope stay in my jacket and simply looked at him.

"You are an American. What kind of work do you do in America?"

I told him that I was a philosophy teacher at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, and that I was glad to get away for a year. I was a little tired of trying to teach adolescents about wisdom year after year. They hadn't suffered enough; they hadn't paid their dues.

He told me that writers get tired, too. Every new writing gets either praised or panned by people who claim to be objective or matter-of-fact. But both critics and writers live in abstractions. They are a little like Stavrogin when he forgets what he did to Matriocha and praises the abstract politics of mass murder.

After he said this, he became restless and started moving things around on his desk. Then he leaned back and told me that lately he had been having trouble writing because he had written too much to the nihilists, who enjoy their despair. He for one did not feel despair. He felt that there is something people can live for. Moments of experience can be illuminated and captured in art and in acts of compassion. We can live without apology and without appeal to higher authorities. And we can fight against the penchant for killing that is at work in human history. He went on to say that he was having trouble writing these things because they do not have the lean clarity he wanted his writing to have. He used to think that there is no goal, no meaning implicit in life. Now he was having second thoughts about this, but he couldn't write about goals and meanings clearly enough.

His warmth melted away my self-consciousness, and I found myself giving him advice. (I was giving *him* advice!) I suggested that he draw a sharp line in his mind between being objective and being subjective and that he write with frank subjectivity. I told him I was spending the year in Paris studying Montaigne, who wrote personally not scientifically, who offered not proofs but essays, expressions of what was in his own heart and mind.

I had my Pléiade edition of Montaigne's *Essays* with me (I carried it everywhere that year), and when I handed it to him, he immediately turned to the wonderful paragraph in Montaigne's essay "On Cruelty" that tells how Montaigne hated cruelty above all other vices and how he could not see a chicken's neck wrung without misery; nor could he bear to hear the scream of a hare in the teeth of the hunting dogs. Still, he loved to hunt.

After he read it to me, he said, "See. He is double, and he is honest about it."

Then Camus said that in his recent book, *The Fall*, he had come a long way toward writing subjectively. But even here he was trying to express the duplicity of a whole generation, rather than the doubleness of a particular fleshly man. He had not touched the carnal truth of himself, or of anybody else.

The Fall is a narrative told in the first person by a man named Jean-Baptiste Clamence. At one time Clamence had been a lawyer in Paris who served the poor without fee, never accepted a bribe, and helped blind people cross the street—in short, he found pleasure in being morally noble. After helping a blind person to cross the street, he would automatically tip his hat toward him or her and take a bow. One day he realized that the hat tipping and the bow were not for the blind person, who could not see him, but for the public. He realized that he was a play actor taking a bow, a Janus, a two-faced god—publicly caring, but privately careless.

One drizzly night in November, when there were very few people about, he was crossing the Pont Royal toward his home on the Left Bank. He found himself passing a slender young woman dressed in black, leaning on the bridge railing and staring into the water. He was moved at the sight of her neck between her dark hair and her coat collar, but he hesitated only a moment and kept on walking. Soon after he left the bridge, he heard a scream and the splash of a body striking the water. He stopped again, without turning around, and he heard the cry repeated loudly in the silent night air. Cries were going downstream; then they stopped suddenly. He stood there trembling, thinking something like "Too late, too far." Then he walked away. He told no one.

Years later he would hear laughter coming

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from behind him, but, when he turned around, there was nobody there laughing. He had become ridiculous; he was no longer a noble public figure. At the very end of his narrative, he wonders what he would do if he had a second chance to help the girl, but all he can come up with is, "Brr . . . ! The water's so cold! But let's not worry! It's too late now! It will always be too late. Fortunately!"

After he read the passage in Montaigne to me and mentioned *The Fall*, I took the neat little book out of his hand and turned to one of the passages I hold dearest in all of Montaigne's writings, a sentence in the essay "On the Art of Conversation": "We are always dealing with particular men, and it is a marvel how fleshly man is."

He told me he cherished it too. And there was silence. I still wonder if he was thinking of the ending of *The Fall*: "Brr . . . ! The water's so cold!"

Possibly because of the silence, I suddenly realized that we had been talking a long time, and I felt that I had imposed myself upon him, that I had intruded into his privacy by sitting there at his desk and talking as if we had all the time in the world. And so I jumped up from my chair and begged his pardon for keeping him so long. He smiled inwardly, with his head cocked to his right. Then he reached for the little paperback of his Nobel Prize speeches, wrote his comment about our common hopes, and handed the book to me. He said something about our being able to talk more some day; but I think we both had a feeling that this was not likely, since he had a trip to take, and I was sailing home with my family in a few weeks.

We shook hands, and his hand felt surprisingly small in mine, with his long face looming large a few inches away from me. Maybe his hand seemed small because we were both somewhat excitable Mediterraneans, sweating a little with our intense leaning, desk-pounding, talking, and reading, and our hands slid in each other. He walked with me to the door of his office, and I started the long descent down the wooden staircase. When I got to the bottom of the stairs there wasn't a thought in my head, just a feeling of sadness, incompleteness, passivity.

On the ground floor of Gallimard, the receptionist was rearranging some papers on her small desk. As was my habit, I started checking my pockets to be sure I hadn't forgotten anything. The Montaigne was there, and the photographs were in another pocket. I opened the little book in my hand, and suddenly I realized I had left my glasses up in Camus's office—I must have taken them off in the heat of our discussion and left them on his desk. I was walking toward the young receptionist, getting ready to ask her to get them from Camus and keep them for me until tomorrow morning. They were only reading glasses, and I could do without them overnight.

But before I got to her desk, I heard a rumble coming from atop the long staircase. Feet were pounding up there, and I heard Camus's voice calling to me, "'allie! 'allie! 'allie!" He was pounding down the stairs, and when I looked up the staircase, I saw that he was holding onto the bannister with both hands as he descended on the run. Somebody had once told me that he had a phobia against bannisters. Apparently he didn't trust them. But down he ran. He got to the bottom of the stairs so suddenly that I had to jump back in order to keep from being stepped on. He stood in front of me with my glasses in his left hand and a big happy smile on his face, "*Tes lunettes! Les voici!*" he called out as if I were on the far side of the lobby, and he handed them to me. Right after I took them he raised his open arms so that his hands fell on my shoulders, and he said, as he squeezed my shoulders, "*'t'ai trouvé! 't'ai trouvé!*" "I've found you! I've found you!"

Then, without another word, he turned and started the long ascent up the Gallimard staircase. I remember thinking for a moment about his poor lungs; people who knew him personally had thought that he would die while young because of them.

In a daze, I walked out into the street, and as I walked out I realized that we had been talking about important things, and his hug had warmed me to him as nothing else he had ever said or written had warmed me. And so, walking down the sidewalk I pulled a pen out of my jacket, and started outlining in the last blank pages of the Nobel book some of the things we had talked about. The words are still there, in red ink, all jumbled by my walking. I had walked a dozen or so steps when I felt that there was someone looking down on my back; I turned, and there in the window of

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his office that opened on rue Sebastien-Bottin stood Camus looking down at me intently.

I do not know what made me do it, but I turned my whole body toward him up there and blew him a kiss with my hand and a big smile. He pulled his head back, and I do not know if he smiled too. It was dusk, and he was far away.

Months later, in January of 1960, I was back in Nashville, Tennessee, reading a term paper for a philosophy course when my wife turned on the radio. Before I could ask her to turn the volume down, I heard that Albert Camus had just been killed in an automobile wreck south of Paris. The driver of the car was his publisher, Michel Gallimard. Camus had been sitting with him in the front seat of Gallimard's sports car, a Facel Vega, and when the car hit a tree, Camus was thrown against the rear window. He died instantly. A reporter wrote that there was a look of horror on his face.

I got up and went out to our front stoop and sat down. I was still holding the term paper I had been reading. I am almost certain that I wrote something on the back of the paper while I was sobbing with rage. I think I wrote: "Camus is dead." This was no more and no less than the truth.

For almost two decades I never published a word about Camus, though I continued to teach his writings and though my studies in the French Resistance during the 1940–1944 German occupation of France kept leading me back to him. In spite of his tuberculosis he played a very active role in the Resistance. In fact, it could be argued that as the editor of the important underground newspaper *Combat* he was part and parcel of the soul of that Resistance. But I couldn't distance myself enough from him to write about him. I felt that he was too close to discuss in print. His last slightly shy hug meant too much for me to try to convey and too much for me to ignore.

And the passing of the years did not help much. Then in 1977 I came across the story of the war years in the village of Le Chambon in south-central France. This Huguenot village of about three thousand people, perched on a plateau in a rugged mountain range, saved the lives of about five thousand refugees—most of them children—during the first four years of the forties, when the Germans occupied France. The villagers were nonviolent. I found myself studying their story as a detailed instance of hospitality to strangers in dangerous circumstances. I believed—and I still believe—that goodness has to do with saving and spreading the joy of life; and I believe that goodness happened there.

In the course of my months of living in the village and getting to know the surviving villagers, I would hear from time to time about Monsieur Camus, who lived over there in Le Panelier during much of the time when the rescue machine of Le Chambon was in full operation. Le Panelier was—and is—a gray, granite fortress-farm on the outskirts of the village of Le Chambon. Camus had gone there for the clear mountain air and the peaceful environment that his poor lungs required. Every twelve days he would go up to the city of Saint-Etienne for pneumothorax injections, but his tuberculosis did not keep him from continuing to work hard on what I believe will be his most enduring work, *The Plague.*

My friend Pierre Fayol, one of the key *responsables* of the French Resistance in the mountain Department of High Loire, told me that Camus was one of the few people empowered to hand out awards to people in the Resistance; but Fayol did not tell me more. I heard that Camus had met, at least once, the leader of the village, Pastor André Trocmé, whose aggressive nonviolence and careful planning did much to make the village the safest place in France for Jewish children. But this was all I heard.

Some of the names in Camus's novel resemble very closely the names of Chambonnais; and the symbolic meaning of the plague in Camus's novel was the same as the ideas Pastor Trocmé preached and practiced during those four dangerous and bloody years. In the novel, the plague is not only inguinal fever carried by fleas on dead rats; it symbolizes the cruel German occupation of France at the time Camus was writing; and, above all—or rather at the bottom of it all—it symbolizes the capacities of man—and indeed of the world at large—for killing and for letting killing happen. Trocmé and his villagers saved those thousands of children without hating or hurting anyone (he did not hate the Germans; he was trying to keep them from doing more evil by killing more children); and Doctor Rieux and the other workers against the plague in Camus's novel were trying to save people's lives—simply that. The novel was as

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much about Le Chambon during the rescue years as it was about continental Europe in the first four years of the forties. And they were both about the pathos and beauty of goodness.

During all of his mature life as a writer, the suffering and death of children were for Camus the crucial instance of evil in history and literature. I do not know whether Camus knew much about the rescue operation going on during his stay in the outskirts of Le Chambon, but the novel he was working on in Panelier fit Trocmé's Chambonnais like a glove. Trocmé did nothing to prevent the Germans from winning the war, and Rieux accomplished nothing as far as stopping the plague is concerned; but both of them resisted as best they could and diminished a little the forces in the world that kill and let kill.

Long after I wrote a book about Le Chambon in the war years, I started having dreams of Camus in Le Chambon. I saw him meeting refugee children at the little railroad station in the village in the early afternoon; and more than once I saw him hugging a few of them shyly and leading them from the station to tiny Madame Barraud's house, which is near the station, or to round-faced Madame Eyraud's house, which is farther away, where the Street of the Soul's Song meets the Street of Lambert.

Two French words summarize the mood (for it is a mood and not a philosophic system) that Camus expresses in his writings and in his life and death. The words are: *solitaire* and *solidaire.* Only one consonant separates the two words from each other, but the difference between aloneness and union is immense. We are born into separateness; then, after a while, we die into it; and, in between our birth and our death, we are strangers and afraid in a world we never made. And yet we feel solidarity with others, love, from time to time. We live out our lives apart from others and as a part of others.

The book Camus gave me is as surely out there, separate from my eyes and my fingers, separate from me, as it is rectangular and cream colored under the brown cellophane. And so every person or thing I see out there is not in me. Out-thereness is not distance. A book is as "out there" as a star or another person. We measure or guess distances with numbers; we do not measure or guess about out-thereness—we simply experience it; we know it as swiftly and as surely as we know that there are colored things in the world.

No one I have ever known has felt the anguish of out-thereness as poignantly as Camus. In the evolution of his ideas, Camus never lost the feeling that the world he moves in is not his, is not himself. There is what he called a "divorce," an abyss between our deepest, private feelings and the world out there. For Camus the richest image of that divorce is Sisyphus with his stone. Sisyphus was king of Corinth, but he was a rebel. He defied the gods, and, in punishment for this, he spent all eternity in the underworld pushing a heavy stone up a hill, only to have it totter at the top and roll down the hill again and again and again. Camus imagines Sisyphus with his cheek against that cold stone, his shoulders pushing against it, his helping foot wedged under it; but what interests Camus especially is the moment when the stone is rolling back down the hill and Sisyphus is watching it go, knowing that he is accomplishing nothing in this alien world.

Each morning is like this for each of us. I have to wake up in the morning again and again and again. I never accomplish making the world part of myself or making my self part of the world out there. But there are things I can do: I can see with utter lucidity the divorce between myself and the world; I can understand my solitude without blinking, or sadness, or despair. And I can do more. I can find peace by taking "the path of sympathy" as Camus puts it in *The Plague.* I can revolt against the ultimate separation between a self and the world—death. I can be *solidaire* with the defenseless of the earth by fighting the plague, the need in mankind to kill and to let others kill.

As he put it in his Nobel laureate speech at the City Hall of Stockholm, he wanted to put himself at the service, not of the makers of history, but rather of the victims of that history. And he would have to do this again and again and again, knowing that his revolt against death would never defeat death. He would just try to limit the harm done. The world is not benign; there will always be victims, but we can feel solidarity with the victims we can embrace; we can feel the joy of helping a few people a few times. The rock will roll down the hill again; but when we are pushing

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it up the hill with our cheek against it and our arms spread out on it, we can be close to that hardness and make a little difference, though only temporarily. We can have the joy of friendship, of love, even while we forget nothing, not even murder.

My dreams and my thoughts about Camus taking refugee children across the wide, gray-granite square of Le Chambon to the home of Madame Barraud or Madame Eyraud have driven me after all these years to write this remembrance of Camus. Camus is long dead, smashed by the alien rock of the world, but the somewhat shy and distant embrace he gave me at Gallimard after he handed me my reading glasses is as real to me as the most recent embrace I have had from my grandchild. The abyss of out-thereness is crossed, but it is not.

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To Stop and Be Stopped in Lourmarin

SAMUEL HAZO

Monsieur Camus, you gave
the stone of our absurdity a name.
Daily we roll it to our graves.
There's no reprieve.
Regardless,
you believed we'd never come
alive until we chose to live
without appeal for living's
sake alone.
Such choices
put self-murder in its place.
Later, you wrote that we are best
when we rebel—against the casual
unfairness of this world, against
acceptance and the cowardice
it hides, against rebellion
itself.
Rebelling with your pen,
you called the evil of our age
our willingness to kill within
the law.
You cited war
and punishments called capital.
Today you'd add the legal
murders of the undesirable,
the old, the differently religious
or the merely different and the not
yet born.
But why go on?
You wrote as poets write.
You showed our shame to us
and stopped us like a stroke.

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For you real justice meant
how daringly we face the unavoidable
while struggling for the unattainable.
Because your words defined
our century the way a hub
defines a wheel, I've come
with other pilgrims here to pay
my last respects.
Standing
beside your name and life-dates
nicked in rock, I disagree
with history.
Your elegists believed
your sudden death by accident
near Villeblevin was premature.
If you could speak, you would
have said that chance makes
nothing premature, that lifetimes
never end the way they should . . .
But what is all this disquisition
to the life of Lourmarin?
The flowers
of the sun return its cyclops
stare the way they always did.
Sweet lavender grows wild
across your grave.
The vineyards
turn the wind to musk.
And all
the never-to-be-duplicated clouds
look undisturbed and indestructible.

✪ SAMUEL HAZO, Director of the International Poetry Forum in Pittsburgh and a Professor at Duquesne University, is the author of *The Past Won't Stay Behind You*, *Silence Spoken Here* (poetry), *Stills* (a novel), and *The Rest Is Prose* (essays). He was recently named the State Poet of Pennsylvania.

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REAPPRAISAL

Joseph Wood Krutch

The Forgotten Voice of the Desert

ROBERT ROWLEY

From 1955 until shortly before his death in 1970 Joseph Wood Krutch (long-time drama critic for the *Nation*, biographer of Samuel Johnson and Henry David Thoreau, latter-day naturalist) wrote a column for THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR called "If You Don't Mind My Saying So." Employing the familiar essay form, Krutch used the column to explore the innumerable subjects that entered his erudite mind. For nearly a decade and a half he philosophized on a wide range of topics—from "Is Homer Obsolete?" to "The Sloburbs," to cite just two examples.

At the time of Krutch's death, Hiram Haydn (THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR editor who originally drafted Krutch to write the column) called "If You Don't Mind My Saying So" "the most popular feature of the magazine." The column was popular because Krutch expressed profound ideas in simple, lucid prose, something he had learned to do as a student writing for his college literary magazine. This clear and precise manner of expression would later help Krutch achieve a goal he had set for himself as a young writer living in Knoxville, Tennessee: to be recognized someday as a true intellectual. That goal was realized in 1929 with the publication of *The Modern Temper*, a book Bertrand Russell described as "profoundly interesting and very penetrating."

Not the first to define modernism, Krutch was, nevertheless, the first to synthesize eloquently various modernistic elements and to describe their effects on the modern world, a world he found more and more to his disliking. The world created by science left no role for the humanities, Krutch felt, and a world without humanities was unfit for human beings. After the publication of *The Modern Temper*, he spent the next twenty-five years trying to formulate a philosophy that would allow humankind some partial escape from the trap of modernism; and when, in 1954, his book *The Measure of Man* (written in his adopted hometown of Tucson, Arizona) won the National Book Award, he believed he had done just that. Krutch's intellectual journey had taken him far out of the mainstream of modern letters, and he spent the second half of his career writing the nature books that were to gain him such a wide popular following.

Now, two years after the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth, it is sad to note that Krutch's work no longer enjoys a large readership. It would be safe to say that, with the exception of college students taking classes in nonfiction literature of the Southwest and converts to environmentalism who recently have been introduced to his early conservationism, Krutch goes largely unread. In Tucson, the town he loved so much, only two memorials to the man exist: the Joseph Wood Krutch Garden, a small oblong cactus garden on the campus of the University of Arizona; and a cherry-wood bookcase that houses Krutch's personal library, which rests in a corner of the Special Collections wing of the university. The inscription at the top of the bookcase reads: Joseph Wood Krutch 1893–1970.

Krutch was born on November 25, 1893, in Knoxville, Tennessee. The Knoxville of Krutch's youth was a city of about thirty thousand, whose provincial atmosphere would

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have appealed to Norman Rockwell. But it did not appeal to the young Krutch, so that, after graduation from the University of Tennessee in 1915, he eagerly left home for New York City, where he had been accepted into the English Department at the Columbia Graduate School.

Although at first he doubted his ability to succeed at Columbia, he soon realized that he fit in perfectly there. In fact, his peers came to view him as something of a sophisticate, a role Krutch readily adopted. He had been quick to turn his back on his rural roots, and at Columbia he worked hard to transform himself into the intellectual he wanted to be. This desire—to be appreciated for his intellectual stature—propelled Krutch through the better part of his first highly successful career, the start of which was marked by the publication of *The Modern Temper.*

When, in *The Modern Temper,* Krutch rejected the "optimism which the Twenties had founded upon science and upon the rejection of what it regarded as all the errors, prejudices, superstitions, and fears of the past," he was reviled by those who viewed him as an abject pessimist alienated from the modern world. Even Ellery Sedgwick at the *Atlantic,* who in 1926 had accepted the first chapter of Krutch's book for publication, despaired of Krutch's position. In the acceptance letter to Krutch, Sedgwick said, "God help you, for your creed never will! . . . I was brought up in a pragmatic school, and my fundamental objection to your ideas is that they lead directly away from all the enthusiasms and ferments which are at the bases of the creeds that work." But in *The Modern Temper,* Krutch was trying to demonstrate that the current scientific enthusiasm would not work simply because it led logically to despair. "My criticism of the modern temper and the premises which generated it was precisely the same," Krutch says in his autobiography, *More Lives Than One*; "it wouldn't work—because it left man too bleakly and hopelessly alone in an alien universe."

> The universe revealed by modern knowledge and modern deductions from it is one in which the human spirit cannot be comfortably at home. That spirit breathes freely only in a universe where Value Judgments are of supreme importance. It needs to believe, for instance, that Right and Wrong are important and enduring realities, that Love is more than a biological function, that the human mind is capable of reason rather than merely of rationalization, and that it has the power to will and choose instead of being compelled to react in a fashion predetermined by its conditioning.

Krutch argued that the scientific search for the validation of those values would lead eventually to the discovery that nature had *means,* but no *ends,* that "the very conception of an end or ultimate purpose is exclusively human." Krutch himself had been led to such a conclusion early in his intellectual life, and he spent the next quarter of a century trying to extract himself from the trap.

In 1920, prior to receiving his Ph.D. in English literature, Krutch began a teaching career at the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. At about the same time he began contributing book reviews to the *Nation,* eventually becoming, in 1924, the drama critic there, a position that permitted him to resign from academic life. He did not return to university teaching until 1937, when he became Professor of English at Columbia. During the interim period, and into his first few years at Columbia, Krutch produced a steady stream of books: *Five Masters: A Study in the Mutations of the Novel* (1930); *Experience and Art: Some Aspects of the Esthetics of Literature* (1932); *Was Europe a Success?* (1934); *The American Drama Since 1918: An Informal History* (1939). And, immediately before World War II, Krutch contracted with William Sloane, then the chief editor of the Henry Holt Company, to write a biography of Samuel Johnson.

Krutch undertook the work on Johnson to counter the long-established view—first promulgated by Macaulay—that Johnson was a dull and eccentric writer whose soggy literary career had been resuscitated by Boswell's biography. For Krutch, nothing could be further from the truth. To him, Johnson was an exceedingly wise man with "a powerful mind and a powerful gift for expression—sometimes witty, sometimes magnificently somber." The enormous energy Krutch expended in writing the biography of Johnson was justly rewarded; it sold more hardcover editions than any of his previous books and led directly to a biography of another of his favorite writers, Henry David Thoreau.

After publication of the Johnson biography in 1944, William Sloane, who had left Holt to

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establish his own publishing house, undertook The American Men of Letters Series and asked Krutch to be a contributing editor. Krutch agreed only if his biographical and critical contribution could be on Thoreau. Krutch's preoccupation with Thoreau dated back to 1930, just after publication of *The Modern Temper*. Returning by train from the West Coast after a series of "modern temper" lectures, Krutch read *Walden* for the first time, penning observations in the margins. In *More Lives Than One*, Krutch says, "I was drawn to *Walden* no more by its criticisms of the social system than by the way in which it illuminated my own growing interest in the world of nature as spectacle, refuge, and teacher of lessons."

Krutch's interest in nature dated back to 1925, when he and his wife, Marcelle, had begun spending weekends and summers in Connecticut, first in Cornwall—where they rented, then owned a home—and later in Redding, where they had purchased an old farmhouse in 1932. After 1932, New York City came more and more to be simply the place of Krutch's employment. By then he had begun to realize that he was not just escaping from the city, but he was escaping *into* the natural world, a world made more interesting by his close reading of Thoreau. Krutch found much to admire in Thoreau, whose writings helped him discover the path that would eventually lead him from the despair he had recorded in *The Modern Temper*. "Thoreau himself, who is too often regarded as a simple primitivist, had said that 'decayed literature makes the best soil,'" Krutch writes in his autobiography. "Or, to put the same thing in flat prose, it is a *return* to nature which is the most rewarding."

Before the biography of Thoreau, which appeared in 1948, Krutch had given little thought to recording formally the observations he had made during his sojourns in the Connecticut countryside. But the idea soon presented itself to him. In his autobiography Krutch says: "One winter night shortly after I had finished *Thoreau* I was reading a 'nature essay' which pleased me greatly, and it suddenly occurred to me for the first time to wonder if I could do something of the sort." The result was *The Twelve Seasons*, published in 1949, which is a collection of familiar essays, each devoted to a month of the year. The book contained descriptions of the natural world, from the animate to the inanimate, as well as philosophical reflections and social criticisms about man's place in nature. This kind of work—nature writing laced with social criticism—was new to Krutch, and it had undoubtedly evolved, in part, through his reading of Thoreau. In *Henry David Thoreau*, Krutch says of *Walden*:

> The theses and adjurations which actually constitute a considerable part of its bulk are, formally, to be considered obiter dicta or, at most, digressions, which the author permits himself in the course of his report on life at Walden.

Krutch was cognizant of the change in direction his writing had taken, but perhaps it was his best friend, the poet Mark Van Doren, who defined most clearly the nature of the transformation. In *The Autobiography of Mark Van Doren*, the author says:

> Joe Krutch, having published in 1948 an excellent, wise life of Thoreau, made good its promise of a shift in the direction of his whole thought about the world by publishing next year *The Twelve Seasons*. I suggested the title, but nobody had suggested the book, which surprised such readers as were not aware that Joe had become a student of nature, a Gilbert White of Redding, who could absorb himself endlessly in tortoises, snowflakes, mice, cats, weeds, and the stars. He was more, of course, than a Gilbert White. Always a speculative man, and certainly a modern one, he had enlarged all of his views until they embraced the most unrelenting questions: of joy, of survival, and of the probable face truth wears when no one is looking.

The Twelve Seasons was followed by *The Best of Two Worlds*, a collection of essays Krutch wrote in Connecticut, which further exemplified the new kind of writing he had begun to perfect: reports on the natural world interspersed with his own special brand of "obiter dicta." In this volume his pronouncements were bolder, his analyses of man's place in nature based on personal as well as on more objective observations; and, in a sense, he seemed to be defending his newfound avocation from the potential criticisms of the more "genuous" society from which he was about to break. In *The Best of Two Worlds*, he writes:

> At some time in the course of his experience, every man should rub shoulders with his fellows, experience the excitement of a metropolis' nervous activity; live close to the great, the distin-

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guished, the famous, and the merely notorious—if for no other reason than because only so can he learn properly to discount them, or at least learn in what ways they are, and in what ways they are not to be taken at their own and the world's valuation.

In 1950, Krutch and Marcelle moved temporarily to Tucson to spend a sixteen-month sabbatical there. Before leaving New York, Krutch had contracted with William Sloane to produce a book that would record his observations of the Sonoran Desert. The product of that sabbatical was *The Desert Year,* a book in which he joyously celebrated the untrammeled beauty of an austere landscape. "There is as yet no crowding of the Sonoran Desert and there is not likely to be any for some time to come," Krutch says in *The Desert Year.*

Perhaps someday, indeed, that will happen. But there is sometimes a happy lag in the progress of Progress, and because the main lines of transportation were laid down in an earlier day, when agriculture was more nearly pre-eminent, the factories will not go up here quite as rapidly as they have elsewhere until the space available nearer established railroads and waterways has been used up. Probably the ax will be laid to our last remaining deciduous forests before the saguaros are felled.

Krutch had first experienced the desert in 1937, during the first of four car trips he and Marcelle took to the American Southwest. He had been immediately attracted to the austere beauty then. In his autobiography, Krutch wrote:

No sooner were we speeding along the roller-coaster road which leads across the undulating desert towards Albuquerque than I felt a sudden lifting of the heart. It seemed almost as though I had lived there in some happier previous existence and was coming back home. I was like a fish returned to water or, more accurately perhaps, like some mammal returned to air. That I might actually make my home in some such region certainly did not occur to me then, but the seed was planted.

In 1952, after the sabbatical, Krutch and his wife decided to move permanently to Tucson. He was delighted with the sleepy desert town he had discovered, but his colleagues and friends were astonished. How could he give up the cultural opportunities of New York City to live in the desert? But Krutch had already carefully considered the question. Ten years later, in his autobiography, Krutch wrote: "Before I came I was already convinced that the natural as opposed to the wholly man-made world had become, for me at least, a necessary part of the context of a Good Life."

Soon after the move, Krutch discovered that his sleepy little desert town was destined for explosive growth, but despite his growing disenchantment with the city's "progress," he led a healthy and productive life there. In *More Lives Than One,* published in 1962, he wrote: "The ten years since we came to Tucson have been the most contented (and often the happiest) of our lives, and never since adolescence have I been physically so well." Always something of a hypochondriac, Krutch had suffered illness throughout his life, especially in the cold climate of New York, but now he reveled in the Sonoran Desert heat.

After moving into his Grant Road house in 1952, Krutch quickly established a writing routine: several hours in the morning followed by daily explorations of the desert. Never was he more productive, writing nature books as well as works of social criticism. In rapid-fire succession there appeared *The Measure of Man: On Freedom, Human Values, Survival, and the Modern Temper* (1954); *The Voice of the Desert: A Naturalist's Interpretation* (1955); *The Great Chain of Life* (1956); *Grand Canyon: Today and All Its Yesterdays* (1958); *The Forgotten Peninsula: A Naturalist in Baja California* (1961); and his autobiography, *More Lives Than One* (1962). Of these works, it is perhaps *The Measure of Man,* which won the National Book Award in 1954, that most pleased Krutch. It formed a counterpoint to *The Modern Temper,* written a quarter century earlier and showed just how far he had traveled in his intellectual life.

In *The Measure of Man* Krutch sought to counter contemporary interpretations of the world, especially those of Darwin, Marx, and Freud, who, Krutch believed, robbed humankind of its self-respect. To accept the theories of those individuals led directly to the conclusion that humans were nothing more than animals, and animals nothing more than machines. To escape such a dismal conclusion, Krutch proposed in *The Measure of Man*—the concept of the "Minimal Man," a being endowed with certain characteristics:

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(1) the capacity to be at least sometimes "a thinking animal" who can, on occasion, reason rather than merely rationalize; (2) the ability sometimes to exercise some sort of will and choice which enables him on these occasions to resist conditions, traumas, and "the dialectic of matter"; (3) the power of making value judgments which are not always, inevitably, and no more than, a rationalization of the *mores* of his society. Or, to sum it all up, a man who cannot think as well as "react" is not a man at all.

The conclusions reached in *The Measure of Man* pleased Krutch because they provided an escape from the dismal view of reality he had painted in *The Modern Temper*. Even though he was criticized by some for not going far enough with his new philosophy, he had discovered a way of living and thinking from which he derived great satisfaction. The satisfaction he originally had derived from his adopted city was short-lived, and he began to understand more clearly the potential for its demise.

As early as 1956 Krutch had a run-in with the boomers and shakers whose goal it was to promote the city's growth. He had been asked to talk at a Rotary Club function on the topic "Tucson as a Place to Write." In his speech he warned of the city's possible decline. Tucson was still a pretty good place to live and to write, Krutch told his audience, but it was becoming less so day by day. The Rotarians were unsure how to take Krutch's message. Years later, writing in his autobiography about the experience, he recounted in part the text of his speech that day. "Every time I saw one of the Chamber of Commerce posters which read 'Help Tucson Grow,' I said to myself, 'God Forbid.' Should they not, I asked, adopt a new motto: 'Keep Tucson Small'?" A local newspaper reporting the next day on the Rotary luncheon talk suggested that "most of the audience assumed Dr. Krutch had his tongue in his cheek." But the community would soon realize that Krutch was dead serious in his criticism of modern society; and over the years he leveled a good deal of criticism at his adopted city.

Much of Krutch's social criticism appeared in essays in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. He used his column, "If You Don't Mind My Saying So," to advance his ideas on art, literature, nature, and society. More than once he featured Tucson as a negative example of civilization's misdirection. In the essay titled "The Sloburbs," published in the Spring 1965 issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Krutch said this about his adopted hometown:

> Tucson, where I now live, is . . . rather worse than many [cities] because so much of its explosive growth is recent and takes the form of rapidly spreading sloburbs. They have not yet reached the area where I live but they are creeping towards it, and as I drove home the other day through spreading ugliness I was again amazed that this sort of anti-city could be so characterless. Everything looks improvised, random, unrelated to everything else, as though it had no memory of yesterday and no expectation of tomorrow.

When Krutch and his wife had first moved into their Grant Road home in November of 1952, they were miles outside the eastern boundary of the city. But over the years they watched Tucson expand steadily towards within Tucson city limits, which depressed Krutch. The relentless encroachment of civilization on his desert paradise had a bad effect on him, and in the final years of his life, he became pessimistic about man's place in nature.

Krutch remained a prolific writer during this period of his life, but, with the exception of his autobiography, the travel book on Baja California, and *The Most Wonderful Animals That Never Were* (1969), he produced little of lasting literary value. Some have even criticized Krutch for writing solely for financial gain. He wrote for such periodicals as *House and Garden*, *Ford Times*, and the *Bell Telephone Magazine*, to name just a few. "As one reads some of his writing from Tucson," John D. Margolis says in *Joseph Wood Krutch: A Writer's Life*, "it is difficult to escape the suspicion that Krutch was occasionally exploiting—perhaps even cynically—the reputation he had come to enjoy."

Nevertheless, during his Tucson years Krutch worked hard to promote conservation of the desert he loved so much. He was one of the original trustees of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, a serious institution that displays the flora and fauna of the Sonoran Desert. And in the early sixties Krutch did a series of three, hour-long television specials on his beloved Southwest. The project had been suggested by Gerald Green, a former student of Krutch's at Columbia, who had become a producer at

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NBC. (Green later wrote a novel, *An American Prophet*, based on Krutch's life and teachings.) The telecasts were a huge success and did much to popularize further Krutch's nature writing. Krutch did voice-overs in the documentaries, excerpts from his books on the region. The second and third installments of the series were devoted to the Grand Canyon and Baja California, respectively, but the first—*The Voice of the Desert*—was filmed largely in the country around Krutch's Tucson home, a desert country he had come to revere almost pantheistically.

In the late sixties, Krutch was diagnosed as having colon cancer, and by the spring of 1970, he realized death was imminent. Propped up in bed at home so that he could look out across his cherished Sonoran Desert, he beheld its austere beauty one last time. He wanted to believe that this desert would endure long after he had gone, but he was not optimistic that humankind would soon mitigate against its own destructive tendencies. In "Man's Mark on the Desert," Krutch says this about the place he loved so much:

> Twelve years ago the Catalina Mountains, ten miles from my front porch, stood out in clear bold outline made changingly beautiful with each shift of shadows from sunrise to sunset. Today it is rare to see them not blurred by haze, and from the summit one looks down upon a pall of smoke and dust which lies like an ugly lake over the town. Newcomers are quite right to ask me where are the clean pure air and the sparkling night skies which I described so enthusiastically in my first book about the desert. "Progress" has taken away from me both my invigorating air and my brilliant stars.

Joseph Wood Krutch died on May 22, 1970.

Unlike Thoreau, whose Walden still remains, no evidence exists at the site of Krutch's former residence to suggest that he ever lived on a five-acre parcel of Sonoran Desert near the intersection of Grant Road and Swan. His modest, mortar-washed brick home was torn down years ago, replaced by the buildings of modern "progress" that in the latter years of his life he had come so much to despise. Here is a volcanized stone mall, the Crossroads Festival Center—an example of architecture unfit for the desert environment. Here, too, is the Hotel Park Tucson, a gigantic complex catering to convention visitors. Between the two buildings is another—The Atrium—a gray concrete box with rows of mirror windows that reflect the desert sky. The Atrium stands at the southern end of Krutch's old property. The owners of The Atrium were to commemorate Joseph Wood Krutch by erecting a plaque in his honor. No such plaque has ever gone up. This is probably for the best, since The Atrium, with its lush interior garden, is hardly the spot for a memorial to a man who came to revere the austerity of the Sonoran Desert.

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Harold Agonistes

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF HAROLD CLURMAN: SIX DECADES OF COMMENTARY ON THEATRE, DANCE, MUSIC, FILM, ARTS AND LETTERS. *Edited by Marjorie Loggia and Glenn Young. Applause Books. $49.95.*

MORRIS FREEDMAN

Few names are as indissolubly linked with American theater as that of Harold Clurman, as he repeatedly, happily, and inoffensively reminded everyone during his lifetime. The world of the theater held him in jovial regard. Married to two actresses (at different times, of course; one was Stella Adler, of the famous theatrical family), he was a founder, in 1931, of the leftist Group Theatre, perhaps the most important American ensemble and repertory theater we have had, and its head until the early 1940s. He directed and produced the works of such major American playwrights as Eugene O'Neill, Clifford Odets, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and William Inge. He acted on the stage, directed films, edited collections of plays, and published voluminously, mostly about the theater. We already have some half-dozen volumes of his essays, reviews, and assorted writings in addition to his book about the Group Theatre and the American stage of the 1930s, *The Fervent Years*, and a curious autobiography that claimed not to be one, *All People Are Famous (In Place of an Autobiography)*.

Now we have another odd, and bulky (1,101 pages) volume called *The Collected Works of Harold Clurman*, whose editors make a point of saying it includes none of the earlier writing. In addition to the chronologically arranged items, it has an introduction by Robert Whitehead, like Clurman a Broadway producer; a rambling reminiscence of Clurman by Kenneth Tynan, the English critic and man of the theater; a transcript of a long conversation Clurman had with Louis Sheaffer of the Columbia University Oral History Research Office; and a scattering of "Unpublished Papers." The book reminds us, first, of course, in detail and depth, of Clurman's memorable career. It also reminds us, pointedly if obliquely, in its jumbled, indiscriminate, slipshod gathering and presentation of items, of the quirky, uncertain, disordered place of theater in American literature and culture.

The literary establishment—publishers, critical journals, universities—barely regard theater as high culture. Many campuses teach dramatic writing in theater departments, for example, emphasizing acting, lighting, costuming, production history, and the like. The nation actually did not begin to amass a worthy library of literature deriving from the stage until roughly 1920, the time of Eugene O'Neill's emergence. From the earliest days of the colonies, with insignificant exceptions, plays had been simply less rowdy live, ephemeral entertainments, in the company of showboats, rodeos, circuses, and Chautauqua billings. We have few texts of early plays, and we usually don't republish or revive any except for antiquarian purposes, as when we observe the centennial of Lincoln's assassination. We remember *Uncle Tom's Cabin* almost exclusively from its original, fictional version, though there were several popular, pirated dramatizations. We do not, nor should we, feel especially deficient in this genre since worthy theater in England, the mother country, also languished from the mid-eighteenth century to the late nineteenth.

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Our earliest twentieth-century respectable drama unabashedly emulated Continental styles and themes, O'Neill with his Strindbergian notes, for example, George Kelly with his Ibsenian ones. Earlier, less well known writers strained for the drawing-room smartness of the Edwardian stage or the social import of George Bernard Shaw. What is striking is how earnestly American masters of narrative prose—Henry James, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, John O'Hara—longed for success in the theater, which eluded them in spite of their gifts for writing compelling dialogue, an irony emphasized in the respectable film, stage, and television scripts others fashioned from their fiction. (Faulkner, of course, did have a spotty career as a Hollywood scriptwriter, during which he worked on the dialogue for the film of Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not.*) As Saul Bellow's novel *Herzog* was achieving fame, his play *The Last Analysis* was flopping dismally.

It is also piquant that, except for O'Neill, the major names in American theater never attained quite the world acclaim, or stature, of our poets and novelists. American playwrights often make their way on sheer energy, free-floating nobility, muddled intentions, political confusion, phony gravity, a mesmerizing aura of poeticism, operatic melodrama, and a vast range of Madame Tussaud mimicry and nightclub, vaudeville, burlesque house, roller dome, wrestling ring, stand-up comic, and circus tumult. The mix of American entertainment caters to the country's chaotic potpourri of audiences, which encourages a virtually manic diversity.

Clurman's association with the American theater—that is to say, his life span—is coterminous with its modern development. His writing about the theater and the ancillary arts provides a major source for understanding that body of our culture, perhaps precisely because it is so much like it in its motley character and range of quality. The critical work of Clurman's (more or less) contemporaries in criticism—Stark Young, George Jean Nathan, Wolcott Gibbs, Brooks Atkinson, Joseph Wood Krutch, Eric Bentley, John Mason Brown, Stanley Kauffmann, Mary McCarthy, Robert Brustein come to mind—was perhaps more "elevated," more intellectual, more academic, more ambitious, more scintillating, more clever, more rigorous. But mostly these other critics, who stuck to their calling as writers during their careers, developed readily recognizable voices in their long associations with particular journals. We can tell their texts by accent and attitude. They mirror an orderly and lofty state of the country's theatrical activity.

By contrast with his colleagues, Clurman was a jack of nearly all the more esteemed theatrical trades. He did not, as far as I know, work in the box office or show ticket holders to their seats. Otherwise he did about everything else done in, around, or to the theater. Although he worshipfully paid tribute to Bernard Shaw's literate and wise criticism, his own expression was on occasion indistinguishable from a press agent's excitable rhetoric or the prattling program notes playgoers skim among slick papered advertisements for pricey perfumes and baubles while waiting for the lights to dim. His work appeared in an improbable gamut of publications, including the *New York Times, Harper's, Esquire,* the *New Republic, Tomorrow,* the *Saturday Review of Literature, Theatre Arts,* the *N.Y. State Community Theatre Journal,* the *JFK Centre Program Notes, Stagebill,* the *Philadelphia Drama Guild Program Notes,* the *Tulane Drama Review,* the *Daily Worker* (under the name of Harold Edgar, when the paper was the official organ of the American Communist Party), and, most impressively and continuously, in the *Nation.* I doubt that Clurman himself would have wanted to see every printed word of his preserved so assiduously and reverentially as it is in this volume.

The collection is, perhaps above all, a testimonial to the power of Clurman's piety. He is so genuinely generous in finding good just about everywhere in the performance arts that we begin, erroneously, to question the rightness of even his most acute observation, especially when it is expressed in overly familiar, mealy terms. His conventional, sketchy portrait of Oona O'Neill Chaplin, for example, who must be a tantalizingly singular person, is of someone who might have turned up in the files of an unimaginative casting director:

> She was very beautiful with flesh like soft marble. But even more wonderful than her beauty (her features are reminiscent of her father, Eugene O'Neill) was Oona's repose. I had never been able to tell whether her quietness was due to modesty or discretion, a desire to

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accommodate herself to Charlie whose ebullience is electric and constant, a natural or an acquired gift on her part developed by having lived in the wake of two overpowering personalities: her father and her husband. Whatever the cause of Oona's effortless ease—her capacity to sit back, listen and absorb—it is a quality so rare in American women nowadays as to seem miraculous.

Even the reviews he wrote under a pen name for the *Daily Worker* have a patina of hackneyed generalization.

I do not wish to belittle Clurman's goodwill or accumulation of fine instincts. They enabled him to record positive, penetrating responses to pioneering and baffling avant-garde plays by Beckett, Pinter, and Albee, as he expressed his unfiltered, sensitive appreciation of their vitality. In spite of intimate association with prickly and abusive show-business types, he seldom recorded rancor. Kenneth Tynan, a hard-bitten, sometimes merciless theater arbiter himself, respectfully admired Clurman's good nature. "Harold sneers less than any critic I've ever known," he said. Clurman is astonishing in his imperturbably bland remarks about the producer Jed Harris, by common consent, including Harris's own, a loathesome man.

But Tynan overreaches in his compliment when he says that Clurman "has never been concerned whether or not there was a line outside the box office. . . . It's none of his business whether it's a hit or not." Most of the time, Clurman found little of quality in anyone or anything commercially successful. He dismissed Jack Benny as "a walking dollar sign; most of his jokes are about money," revealing his total incapacity to sense Benny's sardonic edge and his self-mockery. While it pains me to say something good about Neil Simon, and to seem less appreciative than I am of Arthur Kopit, I found irritatingly unjust Clurman's put-down, in a review of plays by the two, of Simon largely because he makes so much money in order to elevate Kopit almost entirely because of his clever but less remunerative ingenuities. Simon's *The Odd Couple,* not exactly a marital comedy in the company of Shaw or Wilde, provides a dogged but disturbingly commanding record of the tensions between neurotic extremes, which rises above Kopit's mordant skits if not above his small epic, *Indians.*

In spite of a tendency to adulation, Clurman mainly observes a satisfying objectivity. Here is his balanced description of the Lunts:

> An exchange of dialogue between Lunt and Fontanne is a brilliant exercise in subtle rhythms of speech, alternation of tone colors, graceful movement, and a generally witty counterpoint—duel and embrace—of personality. . . . With the passing of time . . . the Lunts have chosen to bemuse their vast public with repeated displays of their virtuosity on the most facile level. Their manner now so greatly supersedes their matter that what we get from them is something like masks without faces. That is what happens when theatre, instead of being made from the stuff of life, becomes a substitute for it.

When he loses himself in his professional critical identity, Clurman makes painstaking and instructive distinctions, as between shortcomings in a text and failings in a performance, or between passable and stunning productions of the same work. He parcels out blame and praise with scrupulous fairness among the myriad artists and craftsmen involved in a production. It is a pleasure to read those of his reviews that emphasize the masterful workmanship that makes for a superior show.

Theater is unique among the arts, frequently combining all of them in one performance, the visual as well as the aural. It makes the boldest claim to resemble and heighten reality. Joyce's Stephen Dedalus classed drama ahead of lyric and epic—that is, ahead of poetry and fiction. He argued that it excluded the opinions and feelings of its maker, leaving it solely up to the characters to produce the work, so to speak. The creator remains invisible, "paring his fingernails." (Joyce, too, longed for success with a play.) Only theater provides—alive, in good number, gathered in one spot for a concentrated period—the sort of community that used to solemnly come together in Greek amphitheaters or medieval churches for edification, enlightenment, and catharsis. (Having such an ideally committed, captive public may be one reason why writers successful in other forms seek achievement in the theater.)

Serious-minded, professional theater critics regularly search their souls to ensure that they do justice to the portentous events that can take place in auditoriums. Shaw repeatedly re-

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viewed his own judgments, and astutely assessed producers, audiences, and other critics for their commitment to theater. James Fenton, currently the Professor of Poetry at Oxford University, and a notably conscientious moralist in his journalism, concludes his collection of newspaper theater reviews with a plaintive rumination "The Right to Be Wrong."

As we might expect from someone formed in the crucible of American social consciousness, Clurman paused repeatedly to reflect on being a critic. Particularly in two extended essays, "A Critic's Credo," in the *Nation* does he address what he took to be his anomalous calling. He asks at one point, "Can a person professionally engaged in the theatre also be a reliable critic?" and cites Shaw in response: "A man is either a critic or not a critic. . . . He cannot help himself." In the course of such reflection, however, he casually contradicts himself, saying, for example, that he really cares very much about the box office. He then promptly rationalizes his position to utter still another reflexive lament about our civilization: "For the closing of the box office bespeaks closing of the theatre, and this would mean that we would end by being more culturally maimed than we are with the theatre in its present deplorable state."

Unfortunately, Clurman concludes this quite confessional rumination with a concession that I don't think he could have meant literally after all his eloquent argument in behalf of quality and value: "Just as opinions, yours are as good as mine." This is cant. Clurman sought vigorously to broadcast his informed, cultivated, dependable opinions, and he certainly didn't expect them to take an equal place in the market alongside everyone else's. Imagine equating a wino's appraisal of a vintage Chablis with a connoisseur's for the sake of democratic sloganizing! We desperately need responsible expertise to help us make our way in subtle and complex enterprises involving taste.

Clurman particularly kept toward the top of his scrutiny the social function and potential of theater, perhaps out of duty to what I take to be his cursory leftism but also out of a more general obligation to his beloved profession. He truly believed that theater ought to reach larger rather than smaller audiences (unlike some of his fellows who believed its salvation lay in shrunken, more elite ones), and he worked toward that end in his various roles. He lapsed too easily into formulaic analysis, however, as in his review of Israel Horovitz's *The Indian Wants the Bronx.* "The boys' malevolence," he writes about the two characters who harass a lost Hindu man at a telephone box, "is . . . a consequence of their idleness in an environment empty of any fulfilling contact or purpose. They are not evil: they are stinging bugs produced by the dry rot in the wide fringes of the social structure. They . . . are part of the greater beastliness in our society, which, because it does not inspire creative action based on humane thought and energy, turns to wanton and senseless destructiveness." He constantly let his cruder impulse to preach vitiate his sharper judgment.

This collection not always flatteringly illustrates Clurman's critical scope. In a *Daily Worker* review of a production of John Wexley's *They Shall Not Die,* a fierce documentary play in behalf of the black young men framed in the early 1930s in Scottsboro, Alabama, for the rape of two white hookers, Clurman complained about the "shortcoming" of the people in its audience, who, he declares, "are simply miscast in relation to this play: they will not act as an audience should at such an event. . . . However, this is a weakness that can be remedied. Readers of the *Daily Worker* can become part of the audience for *They Shall Not Die,* remake it, revitalize it and transform it into the thrilling theatre it essentially is." In another pseudonymous *Daily Worker* review, of *Stevedore* by Paul Peters and George Sklar, he duly asserts: "Its purpose, one might say, is the embodiment of Earl Browder's statement, 'The cause of the emancipation of the Negro from their special oppression is inextricably bound up with the cause of the emancipation of the working class from the oppression of capitalism.'" Browder, of course, was at the time the Communist Party leader. This is like quoting those great critics Stalin and Mao. (A bonus of this book is its archaeological trove of formal party-line aesthetics.)

Clurman is perfectly capable in a *Nation* article, "Plays and Politics," under his own name, of recognizing that Clifford Odets's power did not come from any simple party-line commitment: "[Odets's] plays," he writes, "are not political at all but social, akin in this respect to O'Casey's early work." But he promptly attributes the failure of audiences to respond to

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"social" themes by saying glibly that "audiences and reviewers prefer to think of plays wholly in terms of entertainment, or, betimes, of art." Here he just about repudiates his own precisely tuned capacity to apprehend merit in unorthodox works and those esteemed by the vulgar.

Some critics—Shaw, Beerbohm, Dorothy Parker—manage to sound urbane even when they utter devastating verdicts. After all, a play should not always be something to get all that worked up about. John Dryden, himself a professional man of the theater, early established the model for unstrained, gentlemanly differences on the absurdities of theater (characters speaking in rhyme and meter, for example) in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy,* a dialogue among four gentlemen hanging out on their barge on the Thames as, in the distant background, Dutch guns attack the English fleet. Milton's rejection of the frivolities of Restoration heroic tragedy, in the stern, peremptory introduction to his own dignified closet tragedy *Samson Agonistes,* is the model for Clurman's heated attacks on those who want simply to enjoy a play. For his own sake, one inclines to cool him down.

I would argue for taking Clurman even more seriously than perhaps he took himself: his unflagging geniality suggests someone not committed to any dour principle that rejects rather than embraces. As a man of the theater, an artificer speaking on the nature of his own craft (Eliot's characterization of Dryden), Clurman enjoys a special privilege to be indignant when he finds his profession abused or slighted by slack or inadequate actors, directors, or playwrights. Clurman, I'd say, thoroughly earned the right to express himself any way he wished about theatrical matters and be attended to.

The helter-skelter patchwork of American theater encourages playwrights to ignore the limits and standards by which we evaluate practitioners in other art forms. Critical eminences, academic adherents of fads in criticism, have not addressed themselves as strenuously to dramatic texts as to fiction and poetry. (Shakespeare, of course, offers a striking exception.) This last collection of Clurman's writing highlights the surprising bazaar of delights and satisfactions theater, in all its manifestations, can offer.

Clurman brought to his enthusiasms in and for the theater a catholic taste, a good grounding in contemporary literatures, and a trained nose for the art lurking in unexpected places. He is exasperating, frustrating, and disappointing at times, but if we can take on something of his own combination of persistence, patience, and tolerance, we might develop as receptive an understanding of and appreciation for the American theater as, in sum, he himself displayed.

An Era Ended

THE BETRAYED PROFESSION: LAWYERING AT THE END OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. *By Sol M. Linowitz, with Martin Mayer. Scribner's. $25.*

Reviewed by ELLIOT L. RICHARDSON

In collaboration with his co-author, Martin Mayer, Sol Linowitz has given us a balanced, insight-filled, and authoritative account of the sorry state at the end of the twentieth century of a profession that has always had a uniquely important role in this nation. He amply demonstrates that there has been a betrayal, but not at the hands of an identifiable villain. The profession is the victim, rather, of a large number of mutually interacting and self-reinforcing circumstances. These emerge with increasing clarity as *The Betrayed Profession* unfolds.

As a benchmark from which to trace lawyering's decline, Mr. Linowitz takes its condition as he knew it during his own early days in practice shortly before World War II. His portrayal of the profession as enjoying excellent health at that time is open, of course, to the charge that it may be suffused with nostalgia. Since my own views are in full accord with his and I belong to the same generation, I, too, can be charged with the same bias. But Mr.

✪ ELLIOT L. RICHARDSON served as a law clerk for Judge Learned Hand in 1947–48 and for Justice Felix Frankfurter in 1948–49. He has been U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts, Attorney General of Massachusetts, Attorney General of the United States, and Ambassador at Large and Special Representative of the President for the Law of the Sea.

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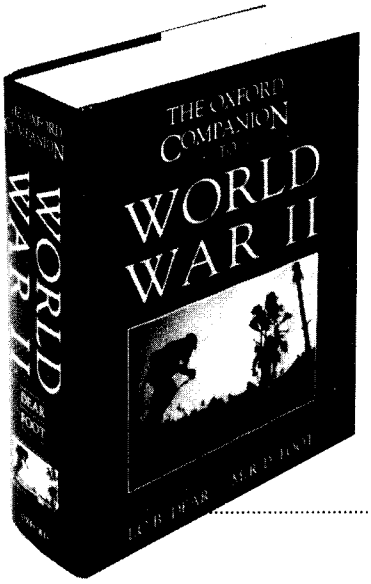

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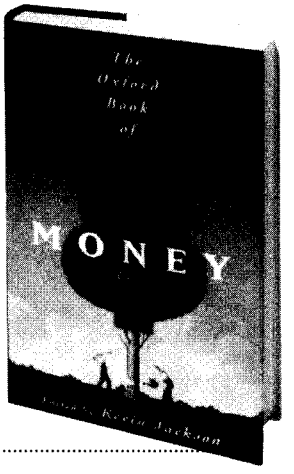

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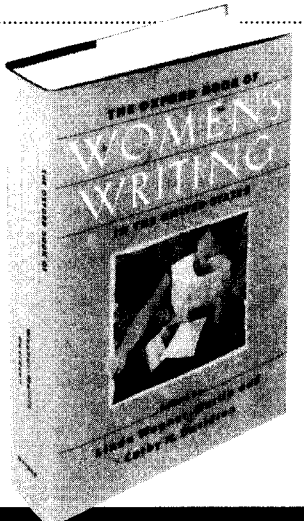

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Linowitz does not ask the reader to accept a generalized version of past glories. Drawing both on his own broad and varied experience as well as on a wealth of contemporaneous material, he gives us a richly textured sense of what practicing law in this country was like forty or fifty years ago.

Sol Linowitz began practice with a small Rochester law firm. I began with a large (by the standards of those days) Boston firm shortly after the end of the war. He regarded the partners he worked for as men of sterling character and high professional standards (very few women were lawyers then). I felt the same way about my seniors. Each of us had earlier had the extraordinary privilege of close association with a true giant of the law—in his case, Elihu Root; in mine, Learned Hand. Given our good fortune in those early relationships, we would scarcely have attributed to other senior lawyers qualities that they did not possess; it's likelier that we would have viewed them as belonging to a lesser order of beings than those great men. In fact, we each had a similar, if less worshipful, regard for most of the leaders of the bar whom we came to know in those days.

The falling off that Mr. Linowitz discerns has two aspects. The first is apparent in the legal profession as a whole. The second is manifested mainly by the large firms that began to grow even larger during the 1970s and 1980s.

With regard to the first aspect, Mr. Linowitz tells us that "an air of belligerence, of all-out 'advocacy,' pervades the theory and practice of law today." All too many lawyers exhibit the behavior of those who "descend upon the relatives of those killed in an airplane accident, or Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange, or former miners or shipyard workers dying of asbestosis." The solicitation of legal business, which used to be viewed as unethical, has intensified competition and diminished the fraternal feeling among the members of the bar. Judges "complain about the decline of civility in their courtrooms and swap stories of lawyers who obviously had coached their witnesses to lie before they put them on the stand." In the county seats, the courthouse, once well kept, "is shabby now, and in some of the larger cities it is a disgrace." Public service is not a prime objective in the legal profession anymore, and the calls of civic duty seem less strong among lawyers.

Mr. Linowitz quotes Tocqueville: "It is at the bar or the bench that the American aristocracy is found. . . . Lawyers, forming the only enlightened class not distrusted by the people, are naturally called on to fill most public functions." And he adds:

> The most frightening measure of what the legal profession has lost is that most Americans do not even remember the trust this society once placed in its lawyers. If a new Alexis de Tocqueville came to America today to study its laws and customs, he could never come up with the idea that the lawyers were the country's natural aristocracy.

The most serious damage to the big law firms has been a decline of collegiality and a shrinkage of the satisfaction associated with what Learned Hand called "the joy of craftsmanship." The partners lived comfortably but modestly. They loved the law and enjoyed personal relationships with their clients. The associates, or junior members in firms, were shielded from such mundane matters as bills or time charges. They understood that the only thing expected of them was to get it right.

The principal contributor to the souring of this atmosphere has been an enormous increase in the cost of legal services. This in turn came mainly from exponential growth in the scale of an ever more closely interconnected global economy and the complexity of the regulatory framework within which business is conducted. The most far-reaching consequence of these and other changes has been a vast increase in specialization.

Mr. Linowitz tells us that the NYNEX Yellow Pages for 1991–92 lists forty-three separate fields of law. Associates, instead of being given broad experience during their first years in a big firm, are now assigned from the outset to some area of specialization. The resulting narrowness of their training makes their skills less transferable. Moreover, according to Mr. Linowitz,

> the specialist has value only as long as the specialty is in demand. . . . Much of the hunger to make top dollar now, which has been so damaging to the reputation of the bar, can be traced to this new insecurity, to the possibility that a lawyer, like an athlete, will have only a few years to maximize his reward and must get what he can get while his talents are in demand.

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The cost of legal services to large corporations has meanwhile soared. In some *Fortune* 500 companies, it accounted for as much as 5 percent of their total budget. Inevitably, these corporations would look for ways of reducing costs, and the most obvious opportunity was to expand their general counsel's offices so that more work could be done in-house. Breaking their exclusive ties to firms with which they had been doing business for decades, these big-ticket clients sought out the leading specialists wherever they might be and invited competition among firms seeking their business. "It is now relatively common," Mr. Linowitz observes, "for firms to compete for a given piece of 'legal work,' each making its own pitch to clients in presentations known as 'beauty contests.'" Partners' compensation once advanced in lockstep with that of others with the same seniority, and they looked forward to being with the firm for the rest of their lives. Partners now get paid in proportion to their productivity (in dollars, that is), jump from firm to firm, and are increasingly vulnerable to being fired outright.

With the growth of specialization in corporate practice and the diminution of the lawyers' counseling function came correspondingly less access to the client's top bosses. There has been a shift as well from "relationship to transaction. The 'deal' syndrome . . . tends to give lawyers an unprecedented stake in getting the deal done even if in their professional judgment there may be a doubt as to whether the deal *should* be done." In 1956, Mr. Linowitz's collaborator, Martin Mayer, wrote an article for *Harper's* calling lawyers "keepers of the corporate conscience." "Who today," Mr. Linowitz asks, "would make such a claim?"

The net result is that large-firm practice has become entirely a "business" and no longer a network of relationships built on loyalty and good feeling. And since the rewards of collegiality, job security, and prestige have diminished, it's natural enough that the pursuit of money should have become, if not an ultimate end, at least the principal yardstick of success. Indeed, it was the status that money confers, not what it can buy—who, after all, can use more than two houses, three Mercedeses, and one yacht?—that drove up the take-home pay of CEOs, investment bankers, and professional athletes long before the lawyers joined in the pursuit of the dollar.

While all this was happening, the law, as a business, grew and grew. Mr. Linowitz cites quite astonishing figures. In 1983 Americans spent $40 billion for legal services; by 1989, the total was $83 billion. "Right after World War II, there was one lawyer in the United States for every 790 people; in 1970, there was one for every 572 people; in 1990, there was one for every 320 Americans. Over the last quarter of a century, the number of lawyers in the United States has gone up by almost two and a half times, and the income of lawyers has multiplied more than six times, probably topping $100 billion in 1993." In 1989, "there were seven firms, all based in New York, at which the partners averaged better than $1 million each."

But the growth of the legal profession has not been accompanied by comparable growth in its prestige. In his article "The Future of Legal Ethics," published in 1991, Professor Geoffrey Hazard, former executive director of the American Bar Foundation, concluded that:

> The legal profession no longer enjoys an unchallenged sense of purpose and worth in its traditional practice of mediating through the courts between business enterprise and popular politics. . . . Its governing norms no longer represent the shared understanding of a substantially cohesive group. They are simply rules of public law regulating a widely pursued technical vocation whose constitutional position is now in doubt. . . . Whether "the bar" as such can remain a coherent entity seems increasingly doubtful.

Although Mr. Linowitz regards as "unduly pessimistic" Professor Hazard's view that each area of the law needs its own code of ethics, his general assessment of the state of the profession is scarcely less negative. "I write," he says, "about an unhappy profession. A study by Johns Hopkins University researchers in 1991 showed lawyers as the most depressed group among the 12,000 people surveyed." It would seem, moreover, that this attitude has infected the current crop of college graduates. The number of students applying to the top law schools dropped as much as 20 percent this year. Not even disgust with the Simpson trial could account for so sharp a decline.

Sol Linowitz does his valiant best, nevertheless, to suggest ways of overcoming the trends he describes. Many of his suggestions are ad-

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dressed to making legal services available to those who need but can't afford them. These suggestions include pre-paid legal service plans, bar associations' referral services, social insurance, and a large increase in *pro bono* work. One of his most interesting proposals is that some things traditionally regarded as lawyers' work be turned over to non-lawyers. For example, social workers would handle divorces, paralegals would handle landlord and tenant cases, and brokers who have passed specified courses would handle the purchase of homes. But, as Mr. Linowitz points out, "really poor people will still lack necessary legal services after all these reforms are completed, and the indications are that this condition will worsen, despite the improvement in the last twenty years." He gives a push, therefore, to proposals to tax legal bills for the benefit of subsidized services at, say, one percent of their face amounts. "Ideally," he suggests, "some of the money taxed from the law firms to support legal services for the poor could be spent through the bar association referral service." But doing more for the poor will help the legal profession itself only to the extent that it makes lawyers feel better about themselves. And, of course, it might also win them a respite from the unending flow of anti-lawyer jokes.

Other measures that Mr. Linowitz touches on include limitations on the abuse of pre-trial discovery and strengthening the prestige, pay, and role of judges. We should also, he thinks, pay attention to Great Britain's experience with the elimination of juries in civil cases and the requirement that the loser pay costs. Courts, moreover, should do more to police legal fees. He urges changing the fee system by reducing its emphasis on hourly charges and substituting fees for the whole job. "We've been paid" he quotes one senior partner as remarking, "to be inefficient."

Even more needed, in Mr. Linowitz's view, is a change of attitude: "The lawyer has a responsibility not only to his client's cause but to helping the world get its work done." "Adult education means we must give up inveterate advocacy," as Judge Hand observed. Rather than talk about winning, therefore, lawyers should instead aim at "getting the client to realize when he had really won the points in dispute that mattered most to him."

Still, as Sol Linowitz regretfully avers, "an era has ended." And yet whatever may be the status of the legal profession, and whatever may be the enjoyment of practicing it, it will deserve the American people's respect and gratitude so long as it remains committed to its fundamental role: "For American society, the challenge is to remain a beacon to those who wish desperately to see their lives governed by laws and not by men." Sol Linowitz usefully reminds all who practice law: "To make the contribution only lawyers can make to the future of our country and the world, we must accept rather than simply assert our responsibilities."

A Mind So Fine

THE VARIETIES OF METAPHYSICAL POETRY: THE CLARK LECTURES AT TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, 1926 AND THE TURNBULL LECTURES AT THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, 1933. *By T. S. Eliot. Edited by Ronald Schuchard. Harcourt Brace. $29.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

With the publication in 1924 of *Homage to John Dryden*—a small book consisting of his essays on Dryden, the Metaphysical Poets, and Andrew Marvell—T. S. Eliot's influence as a critic became immense. Probably the most influential of his ideas was the big one about what happened to English poetry in the seventeenth century. It was then, Eliot asserted in "The Metaphysical Poets," that a "dissociation of sensibility"—of thought from feeling—had set in, and the centuries to come would not recover from it. This dissociation, he claimed, was "aggravated" by two great poets, Milton and Dryden, who "performed certain poetic functions so magnificently well that the magnitude of the effect concealed the absence of others."

By contrast, the metaphysical poets of earlier in the century "possessed a mechanism of sensibility that could devour any kind of experience," and in this they were the heirs of their Italian thirteenth-century predecessors—

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD, Henry Clay Folger Professor of English at Amherst College, is the author of *Randall Jarrell: A Literary Life* and, more recently, *Playing It by Ear.*

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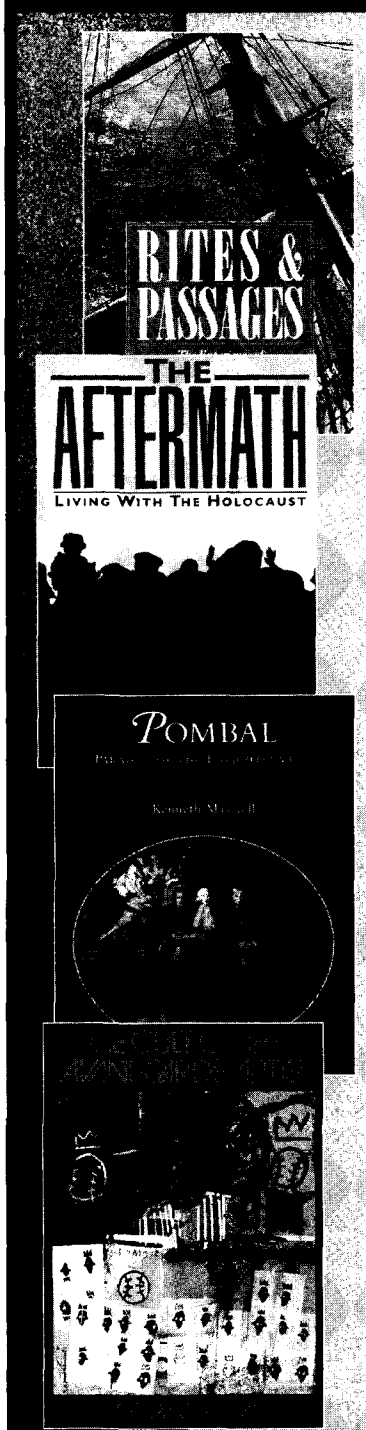

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sors—Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, and Cino. For Donne, "a thought . . . was an experience; it modified his sensibility." By contrast, poets from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries too often thought and felt "by fits and starts"; like Shelley, they fell upon the thorns of life and bled, or like Tennyson and Browning, they "ruminated."

Eliot's own career as a poet was, at this time, particularly uncertain. He published "The Hollow Men" as the final poem in *Poems 1909–1925*, ending things not with a bang but a whimper. He abandoned, without completing it, his verse drama *Sweeney Agonistes*. He was seriously thinking about a conversion to Anglo-Catholicism, and he was about to launch once again his magazine *The Criterion* (it would be "European" in tone) under the patronage of Lady Rothermere and his employer, Faber and Faber. When, having been nominated for the post by Middleton Murry, he was invited to deliver the Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, in the winter of 1926, he took it as an opportunity to explore further and at length the "dissociation" theory. In his preface to the lectures, Eliot announced his intention to rewrite them into a much longer work to be titled "The School of Donne." This would include detailed examination of other poets (the lectures concentrate mainly on Donne, Crashaw, and Cowley) and would be part of a three-part work titled "The Disintegration of the Intellect," in which Elizabethan dramatists and seventeenth-century prose writers would also be considered. None of these projects materialized, and Eliot decided not to publish the Clark Lectures.

They have at last been published, along with the Turnbull Lectures, three talks Eliot gave at The Johns Hopkins University in 1933, when he was in America delivering the Norton Lectures at Harvard (*The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*) and the Page-Barbour ones at the University of Virginia (*After Strange Gods*). The Clark and Turnbull lectures have been edited within an inch of their lives by Ronald Schuchard, whose introductions to each set are deft and highly informative. Mr. Schuchard's learning and detailed grasp of Eliot's writings are manifest, but the heavily footnoted text of the lectures themselves (the notes often taking up from a third to half the page) can be seriously distracting. To identify at length every name Eliot mentions seems in many cases unnecessary; surely anyone who picks up a volume as highly specialized as this one doesn't need to be filled in, say, on who John Henry Newman was and what important books he wrote. Best to read the lectures first with occasional glances at footnotes, then a second time without such glances.

Schuchard's introduction to the Clark Lectures (I shall confine myself to them, since the Turnbull ones repeat much of the Clark material) gives an excellent sense of the vibrant Cambridge milieu into which Eliot stepped. Among the fellows at Trinity in 1926 were J. G. Frazer (of *The Golden Bough* fame), Alfred North Whitehead, Frances Cornford, G. E. Moore, and A. E. Housman (who attended every lecture and sat in the front row). Younger Cambridge dons from the English faculty, also in attendance, included I. A. Richards, E. M. W. Tillyard, Basil Willey, Mansfield Forbes, and F. R. Leavis. T. R. Henn, an English don who was hostile to Eliot, found the lectures "recondite and inaudible"; it is not clear whether the audience—including many "ladies" with notebooks (women were then often mocked for attending too many lectures too assiduously)—agreed. Schuchard suggests that Eliot eventually decided against publishing them because he didn't have the economic security or the time to write scholarly books: in the editor's words, "the exploratory essay was to remain his critical forte." Another way of putting it is that Eliot's style of pronouncement was ideally suited to the short flight in which an "exploratory" large assertion was advanced, something was presented in a new and striking way, after which the writer quickly moved somewhere else, rather than staying and developing the argument (as a book-length effort would need to do).

By 1947, in his second essay on Milton, Eliot had pretty much given up on the "dissociation" theory, saying that he now felt he shouldn't have put the finger on Milton and Dryden as culprits, and that if a dissociation did take place its causes were too complex and profound to account for in literary-critical terms. Ten years later, in his stunning chapter "Dissociation of Sensibility" from *Romantic Image*, Frank Kermode demonstrated how vague and vulnerable to criticism Eliot's theory was in its details but how important it was for a modernist poet like himself (and Yeats and Pound as well) to imagine a time somewhere

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back there in history when life was single rather than double, the intellect at the tips of the sense, thought and feeling as one. (Yeats's phrase for it was Unity of Being.)

Eliot's great good place, as far as poetry was concerned, was thirteenth-century Italy where, as he puts it in the concluding Clark Lecture, "the human spirit reached a greater sum of *range, intensity,* and *completeness* than it has ever attained before or since." Metaphysical poetry—as distinguished from "philosophical" or "allegorical" or "narcotic" poetry—"gives the emotional equivalent of thought, a rarified, but perfectly definite world." With Dante and his circle, "the feelings are organised according to an organised view of the universe, so that there is given the feeling-equivalent for every detail in the system." The English metaphysical poets even before the presumed "dissociation" show something less than such unity; Donne may be a great poet, says Eliot, but he is a great poet of "chaos," and his poetry—unlike Dante's—shows "the absence of order, the fraction of *thought* into innumerable *thoughts.*"

Eliot loved to try out the memorable formulation, almost too neat to be true—such as this one: "The trecento had an exact statement of intellectual order; the seicento had an exact statement of intellectual disorder; Shelley and Swinburne had a vague statement of intellectual disorder." Or this one: "In Dante . . . you get a system of thought and feeling; every part of the system felt and thought in its place . . . for the thought and the emotion are reverse sides of the same thing. In Donne you get a sequence of thoughts which are felt; in Crashaw . . . you have a sequence of feelings which are thought."

These heady formulations are open to all sorts of critical query and attack, as was the "dissociation" theory. Eliot seems to acknowledge this in the final lecture when, after apologizing for the relatively thin treatment given to Laforgue and Corbière as nineteenth-century metaphysical poets, he adds that he should also have dealt with Baudelaire and should have traced the problem of Good and Evil through the century. Then, with a sigh, he concludes the paragraph:

> My theory of metaphysical poetry is, you will have seen, a heavy one for a mere man of letters to shoulder. It implies a theory of the history of belief, in which the thirteenth century, the seventeenth century, and the nineteenth century, all occupy their places in what I have called a process of disintegration.

A heavy theory indeed, especially for the man who praised Henry James for having a mind so fine that no idea could violate it. When, in one of the Turnbull Lectures, discussing a stanza of Donne's "The Relique," Eliot suddenly opines that it indicates "that something was beginning to go wrong with civilzation about that time," you know his mind has been violated by an idea that sounds quite half-baked.

The way to read these lectures, as with all Eliot's criticism, is to put up with or tolerate the theory for the practical results it produces—for, that is, the insights about particular poems and poets and literary periods it generates. In these terms the lectures are full of marvelous things, especially about Donne, but also about Crashaw and Cowley. The absences one most regrets are George Herbert and Andrew Marvell, who surface only briefly. Eliot had already published his essay on Marvell, and he would not write about Herbert until his pamphlet of 1962, by which time his criticism had grown rather bland. But there was nothing the least bland about his judgments in 1926, especially in comparing one writer with another. Such comparison was at the root of Eliot's brilliance as a literary critic; typically he didn't do "readings" of poems by going through them in detail, but he worked instead by hit-and-run, juxtaposing lines from two poets with only the briefest critical commentary (sometimes no more than a sentence), then moving away from the scene and on to something else. Often the commentary is surprisingly humorous. By way of describing Donne's satires, Eliot mocks the Elizabethan John Marston, who, he says, "lays it on with a trowel." Quoting a couplet from Marston—"Avaunt! ye curs, howl in some cloudy mist, / Quake to behold a sharp-tongued satirist!"—he remarks, "I am much mistaken if any cur, listening to this sharp-fanged satirist, would do anything but curl up and go to sleep. Of some terribly conceited lines from Crashaw, he notes; "One cannot conceive the state of mind of a writer who could pen such monstrosities."

Sometimes one of his sentences breaks on you with the wonderful force of fresh intelli-

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gence and you feel that he is perhaps the smartest man in the world: "Cowley is an inferior Petrarch; that Petrarch whom Johnson [Samuel] treats with the respect only given to a subject one knows nothing about and does not wish to take the trouble of looking into." (Yet Eliot when he deals with particular poems reminds us of no one so much as Johnson.)

Sometimes Eliot will put a good poem and poet into perspective by invoking a more demanding one: of the first stanza of Marvell's "The Definition of Love": "My Love is of a birth as rare / As 'tis for object strange and high; / It was begotten by Despaire / Upon Impossibility"), he says, "Compared to the twistings of the brain of Donne, this is mere parroting of anagrams." From the now forgotten metaphysical poet John Cleveland, Eliot produces an especially barbarous stanza and calls it "A stanza which, I admit, I have never taken the trouble to understand." How refreshing to hear this from a literary critic! Sometimes a burst of admiration wells up and interrupts the point being made: about the final stanza of Donne's "The Blossome" Eliot exclaims, "In these lines—and one would go to gaol for ten years if it would help to write as good lines as these!—there is a good deal of what is called cynicism."

A year after he delivered the Clark Lectures, Eliot sent a typescript of them to Mario Praz, who is acknowledged more than once in them. Praz responded with some criticism of Eliot's scholarship (probably depressing him, says Schuchard), but he made the following excellent comment:

> It will be a book of criticism which will read like fiction, perhaps, and so much better for it, if it does: history is, after all, as somebody said, always contemporary history, and in writing your book, you will be writing the history of your own mind. And your mind, I am afraid, interests me even more than Donne, Crashaw, and all the dead worthies.

That should have cheered up Eliot (if anything could), on the verge of being baptized into the Church of England. For those like myself who consider the mind of that dead worthy, T.S.E., to be of nearly limitless interest, it is splendid to have these lectures in print.

Swing Time

SWING CHANGES: BIG-BAND JAZZ IN NEW DEAL AMERICA. *By David W. Stowe. Harvard University Press. $29.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN BOSTWICK

Much of what passes for music criticism is in fact biography. In the world of jazz criticism, certain biographical anecdotes have been repeated so often that some musicians have achieved a kind of mythic status. The stories and nicknames are familiar to almost anyone with even a passing interest in jazz: Satchmo's cutting contest with Jabbo; the Hawk burning out the engine of a Cadillac; Pres's tragic army tour; Bechet's tailoring business; Bird setting his hotel room ablaze.

One such legend suggests that swing erupted as a mass cultural phenomenon in July 1935, when the Goodman orchestra played to an enthusiastic crowd at the Palomar ballroom in Los Angeles. Benny Goodman would go on to become the "King of Swing," and it seems fitting that he should be associated with the birth of swing. David W. Stowe, whose book chronicles the swing era, challenges this wisdom: "A more accurate if less mythic account of the swing era's beginning points to a specific piece of music: 'The Music Goes 'Round and Around.'" Stowe supports his claim with record sales information and news clips of the time, setting a scholarly standard that he maintains throughout *Swing Changes.*

Stowe is interested in swing as a cultural-historical phenomenon—not as myth and perhaps not even as art. He tries to solve the difficult problem of writing about music by expanding his terms. For the purposes of his study he urges us to "[broaden] our conception of 'the music' to include social elements: audience, performance context, ideology, and mass media." Stowe looks at swing as a microcosm of the larger American society that surrounded it. Swing is a so-called sign of the times—at once a reflection of New Deal America, an agent for social and political change, and a sign of things that were to come.

If there is a representative figure in *Swing*

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Changes, it is John Hammond. Significantly, Hammond was not a musician but a critic, recording director, talent scout, patron, and civil-rights activist. He was the quintessential representative of what Stowe calls the "swing community." Hammond helped form important critical assumptions, largely through his early writings on jazz. According to Stowe, these assumptions influenced audiences, recording companies, and even musicians. Stowe says of Hammond and other early critics of swing that "never before had an elite vanguard exerted such an influence on both the production and the consumption of a subcultural form, functioning at once as patrons of particular artists and as evangelists to the broader American public." These early critics, nearly all of them white men, had leftist political views. Swing attracted them in part because of its ideological possibilities.

Swing's meanings, Stowe suggests, were "overdetermined." Swing could mean all things to all groups: "Swing music could be held up as a proletarian protest music. . . . It could just as easily be hailed as a product of the American way of life." Swing attracted organizations as apparently different as the Communist Party and the United States Army. During World War II, for example, the army appropriated swing as a symbol of the inclusiveness of America. But this project was problematic. In an excellent section of the chapter "The Conscription of Swing," Stowe discusses the disillusionment of black swing musicians and soldiers who endured the "persistence of institutionalized racism in a war ostensibly against racism." On the other side, Stowe suggests that the Communist Party, despite its own efforts, could never fully integrate itself with swing because of the "class contradictions embedded in the production and consumption" of the music. Ultimately, swing is best seen in the context of the "Americanist" ideology of the 1930s and 1940s. Americanism, like swing itself, Stowe writes, "provided a vocabulary for articulating a variety of often-contradictory political programs."

In his chapter "The Incorporation of Swing," Stowe discusses the appropriation of swing by mass industry. He reminds us that jazz is not, or did not remain, a folk music. Swing was the leading form of popular music during its hey-

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day and, as such, it was big business. A network of booking agencies, radio stations, record companies, and filmmakers propelled, and was itself altered by, swing. Stowe writes: "Few were fully aware how deeply swing was indebted to the 'culture industry' for its emergence and popularity, and to what extent the music was shaped by the intervention of the corporate apparatus that distributed it." In 1941, for example, a dispute between the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) and radio networks led to a broadcasting ban of all ASCAP material. This strike directly affected what musicians played and helped lead to the practice of "swinging the classics." Other industries, such as the movies, turned to swing as a promotional tool. Hollywood employed artists like Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday as actors and musicians. But the film industry's relationship with swing was, like the army's, problematic. Portrayals of black musicians in movies often did more to promote vicious stereotypes than either swing music or an ideal of racial equality.

Political, economic, and social changes after World War II left most big bands with no choice but to break up or reduce their size. Interest in dancing waned, and other music, such as jump and country, claimed listeners. Big bands gave way to small groups, and swing deviated into modern jazz or bebop. Stowe stresses the similarities between swing and its musical successor. Bebop did not enjoy swing's popular appeal, Stowe suggests, not because of anything inherent in the music, but because bebop "emerged at an inopportune historical moment." Near the end of *Swing Changes*, Dizzy Gillespie gives his own explanation for bebop's commercial failure: "We forgot to emphasize in the publicity the most important thing, the music."

We might say something similar about *Swing Changes*. The music (in the sense that Gillespie means music) is curiously invisible throughout most of Stowe's book. Stowe is excellent when dealing with swing as a business, as a political tool, as a kind of social phenomenon or fad. But he rarely addresses what he sometimes refers to as "the music itself." Presumably, "the music itself" differs from that which is broadly defined as "music" in the introduction. Perhaps it is impossible consistently to regard music as more than what is written, played, and sometimes recorded by individuals—that is, to regard music "not simply as text but as social practice."

On the rare occasions when Stowe addresses "the music itself," he sounds uncharacteristically awkward. Take, for example, his discussion of "commonwealth" bands, outfits such as the Casa Loma Orchestra that settled band decisions by voting: "Musically, according to its supporters, the system encouraged better musical teamwork: crisper attacks, more precise ensemble passages, and so on." This is not the kind of writing that is likely to give anyone a new or better appreciation of jazz music. Stowe writes that he is "studying culture through music." It might be more accurate to say that he is studying mass cultural representations and the mass cultural absorption of swing. He is more likely to analyze, for example, a swing-era short story or Hollywood movie than an actual swing recording in an effort to reveal what he calls the "cultural meanings" of swing.

To get a clearer sense of Stowe's project, we can't do better than turn to one of the many notes in the back pages of his book. There he tells us that Theodor Adorno's "final word on jazz could be taken as a fairly apt summary of [his] own study." Here is that final word, as quoted by Stowe:

> Certainly, jazz has the potential of a musical breakout from this culture on the part of those who were either refused admittance to it or annoyed by its mendacity. Time and again, however, jazz became a captive of the culture industry and thus of musical and social conformism; famed devices of its phases, such as "swing," "bebop," "cool jazz," are both advertising slogans and marks of that process of absorption.

But Stowe's intent is not to view the "culture industry" as the kind of inexorable, hegemonic force those in the Frankfurt School took it to be. Here he is discussing the decline of swing: "The music industry of the late 1940s was both responding to the changing tastes of its audience and working to redefine those tastes. Rather than being seen as opposing forces, swing's producers and distributors and its audience should be understood as joined in constant dialectic exchange." His argument, then, gives agency to audience as well as industry. This argument does indeed seem expansive until we realize that the musician is either trivialized or simply ignored.

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Jazz, according to Eric Hobsbawm, is "players' music." Martin Williams defines jazz similarly as "primarily a player's art." These definitions help explain why so much of jazz writing is biographical. Like Stowe, both Hobsbawm and Williams recognize that jazz combines elements of entertainment (or business) and fine art. But I don't believe either of the older critics works under Stowe's assumption that music's meaning is socially constructed. Stowe is defensive on this point: "This is not to strip musical texts of their particularity, to claim that musical performances or texts are homogeneous." But this assumption takes critical emphasis away from the artist, even the art, and places it on broad cultural and historical factors. As a result, something like the "swing industry" is in danger of being reduced to any number of industries that have nothing to do with artistic merit. Although this is not Stowe's intent, it is at times the effect.

Every scholar has particular ideas about the importance, even relevance, in critical studies of such questions as artistic merit, artistic intentionality, and so on. Roland Barthes writes in his controversial poststructuralist essay, "The Death of the Author" (1968), that "the image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centred on the author." Barthes suggests that the author is not an authority or ultimate source of meaning or interpretation but a kind of impersonal receptacle for language. The essay is more about ways of reading than anything else, but its de-emphasis of the author as a source of meaning might have some application to *Swing Changes.* When Stowe writes that "historians must regard the score or recording as merely the sign of a large field of social forces that provide the ground for those texts," one wonders if he is heralding something like the death of the jazz musician. Any such suggestion is likely to send jazz fans hurrying back to stories of Bix's love of drink, if not simply to drink.

But, however we feel about Stowe's critical assumptions, it would be a shame to dismiss his approach and ignore his book. *Swing Changes,* with its emphasis on the importance of social elements in the creation of meaning in swing, is an excellent example of how jazz and other arts are being studied now in some quarters of the academy. Stowe writes in a clear style and with a thorough knowledge of swing-era American history. Finally, one must admire the careful research that has gone into the study. While Stowe at times seems to be employing new ways of avoiding the old problem of writing about "the music itself," he reports much of value about the era that saw the rise and fall of swing in American life.

Big Daddy

THE FATHER: A LIFE OF HENRY JAMES, SR. *By Alfred Habegger. Farrar, Straus, Giroux. $30.*

Reviewed by LINDA SIMON

It is altogether appropriate to call this biography of Henry James, Sr., *The Father*: James, after all, is hardly remembered as a philosopher in his own right, and even this impressively researched and thoughtful portrait is not likely to send readers back to James's often arcane harangues on philosophical, religious, and social issues. Instead, he endures as a figure of interest largely because of his famous children: William, the philosopher; Henry, the novelist; and Alice, the diarist. The first question to ask about Henry James, Sr., is how he managed to produce a family where so much genius flowered.

Alfred Habegger, author of *Henry James and the "Woman Question,"* addresses this question but does not allow it to dominate this study. Although the children emerge as important characters—Henry, Jr., more than the others—Habegger has other questions to ask about the complicated, contradictory man who was Henry James, Sr. How, for one, can we locate the sources of his ferocious rebellion against prevailing religious and social ideas? How can we explain his abiding self-hatred and bitterness? How can we understand his attraction to Swedenborg, Fourier, or even Emerson? Where do we place him within the intellectual context of his time?

Henry James was born in Albany, New York, in 1811, the son of the business entrepreneur William James, one of the richest men in the

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country in his day, and his third wife, Catharine Barber James. A difficult and headstrong child, he was cut down, literally, in early adolescence (here Habegger does a heroic job of dating this crucial event) by severe burns to his right leg that resulted in infection and eventual amputation. Years of recuperation changed James dramatically. He emerged from his sickroom angry, self-recriminating, depressed, and filled with a guilt that he could never explain. He would spend much of his life trying to reconcile those feelings. "Lying on his bed," Habegger tells us, "the boy had been afraid that the burning and severing were his just deserts. The man he turned into struggled with this verdict all his life, sometimes confirming it, sometimes fighting it. And the more he talked about the need to cut the gangrene away, the more it seemed to be a permanent part of him."

If James had been a difficult son before the accident, he was even more so afterward. His father wanted him to attend Union College, where he was a trustee; but after a brief period there, where Henry majored in drinking and cavorting, he ran away to Boston, taking a job on a small newspaper and renting a room of his own. His claim of independence was short-lived; succumbing to his father's desires, he returned to Union and graduated with his class. Eventually, he enrolled in Princeton Theological Seminary, halfheartedly preparing to follow an older brother into the ministry.

His father's death, however, liberated him from having to seek a livelihood. Although bequeathed only a tiny legacy because of his irresponsible behavior, Henry—along with other discontented family members—broke the will, ensuring himself a substantial income for life. He left the seminary, but not the study of religion: for the rest of his life, he fashioned himself into a gadfly, taking unpopular, and often incomprehensible, positions on questions of religious authority, spirituality, and divinity. Habegger explores the connection of these ideas to James's traumatic injury, and also to nineteenth-century debates about Calvinism and social reform. James shared with many of his contemporaries his struggle with authority, his questioning of the nature and function of evil, and his disgust with urban social life.

When he was twenty-nine, James married Mary Walsh, the sister of one of his Princeton friends. Because the James family burned much correspondence relating to Mary, Habegger has few sources to help him understand the "steady caretaker" who became Mrs. Henry James. James's later writings on free love, marriage, and women inspire Habegger to question the quality of their relationship. He decides that Mary had limited intellectual interests, "a buttoned lip and a very practical and dutiful mindset." While she nodded in approval as she listened to her husband's monologues, she was not an intellectually stimulating companion. As Habegger shows us, however, James was not above flirting with other men's wives to get the stimulation he craved.

Henry James, Sr., tried mightily to force himself into intellectual circles in America and Europe peopled by such men as Emerson, Bronson Alcott, and Thomas Carlyle. His courting of these men showed, on the one hand, his genuine engagement with their ideas; on the other, it also showed his intense desire to achieve something like their fame. Emerson, especially, attracted him. James wanted Emerson for his closest friend, his confidant, his spiritual brother: his letters to Emerson, Habegger says, are "the richest emotional outpourings he left behind, [if they] are not love letters, it is hard to know what to call them."

While Emerson served to introduce James to many famous intellectual figures of the day, ultimately, he rebuffed his friendship. When James hinted that he would have liked to join the lively Transcendentalist community in Concord, Emerson did not respond; when James hoped that Emerson might persuade him to remain in America instead of moving to Europe for many years' stay, Emerson offered letters of introduction and waved bon voyage.

James's ferocity and lack of empathy made him a difficult companion. Increasingly isolated, he turned to his family for solace and support. But he often felt frustrated by his paternal role and once exclaimed that he wished his wife and children would be struck dead, so as to free him from the burdens of responsibility that caused him such enormous anxiety. Irritable, irascible, he could be a demanding and uncompromising father and husband.

James suffered throughout his life from recurring depressions and sometimes vio-

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lent mental breakdowns. Apparently he was incapable of reflection about his own emotional state and even less responsive to anyone else's. His "rejection of psychology," Habegger writes, "had the disadvantage of causing James to ignore emotional cues, his own as well as others', and to become somewhat despotic. . . . James's blindness to his own and others' feelings must have made him a very trying parent at times."

He surely frustrated his children, and his eldest son, William, who published a posthumous selection of his father's writings, was not alone among his siblings in straining to understand his father's ideas. "Father is a genius certainly—a religious genius," William commented. "I feel it continually to be unfortunate that his discordance fm. me on other points in wh. I think the fault is really his—his want or indeed absence of *intellectual* sympathies of any sort—makes it so hard for me to make him feel I warmly respond to the positive sides of him."

Habegger spends little time exploring the fate of the two youngest James sons, Wilkinson and Robertson, the subjects of Jane Maher's fine study, *Biography of Broken Fortunes.* Following Alice's biographer, Jean Strouse, Habegger presents James's only daughter as her father's saddest victim. Alice, says Habegger, learned too well "that man can find redemption only in the act of turning against himself. . . . Deprived of her brothers' professional resources and opportunities, Alice applied the paternal wisdom with lethal directness on what her family would have called her organism."

Habegger counters the popular view—a view, moreover, that the James family perpetuated—that Henry James, Sr., was a "benignant" man who devoted himself to the good of his children, preached tolerance, and practiced self-effacement. Instead, he shows us a man who developed a convoluted personal philosophy to account for his own feelings of pain and guilt, his conviction of his essential sinfulness and capacity for evil, and his fragile sense of self. He was egotistical, intolerant, hot-tempered, but never less than earnest and brutally honest in his quest for truth and enlightenment. "Henry James was wonderful, but he was hard to bear," one critic noted in a burst of generosity. Readers of this fine biography are likely to agree.

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The Voice of Howard Mumford Jones

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES AND THE DYNAMICS OF LIBERAL HUMANISM. *By Peter Brier. University of Missouri Press. $32.50.*

Reviewed by DAVID LEVIN

Howard Mumford Jones, who died in 1980, had a memorable voice. When I first heard his booming baritone in 1941, in the survey of English literature from Beowulf to Yeats, Jones was in his fiftieth year. For me, his voice resounded in Emerson Hall with the full authority of Anglo-American culture. I neither heard nor suspected any hint of Jones's origins in La Crosse, Wisconsin, or any sign that at my age Jones had matriculated in the La Crosse Normal School before going on to the University of Wisconsin in Madison. In those lectures, moreover, one immediately noticed his histrionic flair and his love for the cadences of his own prose and of the major poets. He made us hear the majestic lines of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Arnold, and Browning. Pacing about the platform so that we could not miss his reliance on memory, he often recited central passages with an accent—almost British—that articulated "*t*'s" and short "*i*'s" in ceremonial formality.

One of the strong themes of Peter Brier's brief book, *Howard Mumford Jones and the Dynamics of Liberal Humanism,* celebrates Jones's paradoxical commitment to studying and remembering recondite historical facts while insisting on broad cultural generalizations. Not until my return to complete my undergraduate studies after World War II did I learn that Jones had helped to found Harvard's graduate program in the History of American Civilization. Against the condescension of American professors who taught their own language as if it had been attached only to the literature of a foreign country, he had stoutly defended the study of American literature. This voluble celebrant of comparative literature, who had translated Heinrich Heine and had written *America and French Culture, 1750–1848,* had also stooped to writing a daily book review in a local newspaper while teaching at the University of North Carolina, championing there such earthy novelists as Ellen Glasgow. Before President James B. Conant recruited him to the Harvard faculty and awarded him an honorary degree in Harvard's tercentenary year, Jones had taught literature at the state universities in Austin (where he had also coached drama), Chapel Hill, and Ann Arbor. Along with Perry Miller, F. O. Matthiessen, the elder A. M. Schlesinger, Frederick Merk, Harry Levin, Herschel Baker, Bernard De Voto, Albert J. Guerard, Kenneth Lynn, Warner Berthoff, Henry Nash Smith, Wallace Stegner, Mark Schorer, and Daniel Aaron—all permanent or temporary immigrants to the Harvard faculty from the Middle West, the Southwest, or the Far West—Jones helped to leaven the New England lump.

Jones insisted on tracing broad connections between the great British and Continental writers of the nineteenth century, but he also demanded that graduate students read widely among minor writers. For a course of independent reading in the nineteenth-century British novel, he prescribed fifty-two titles for me, including John Galt's *Annals of the Parish* and Robert S. Surtees's *Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities.* He became notorious in the lore of doctoral candidates as the dragon at oral examinations whose flaming demands for trivia terrified the student and amused Jones's fellow examiners. Here again he revealed his own extraordinary memory, but the message he sent differed from the folklore and gossip. Memory and laborious research, he insisted, are essential to historical study in the humanities. In some of the meetings of the seminar required of all graduate students in Harvard's American Civilization program, he deplored our ignorance of cultural information—as if standards were collapsing right before his eyes when he saw that we could not name the inventor of the twine-binder or the barbed-wire fence.

Like the elder A. M. Schlesinger, then, Jones was an aging innovator who incurred from some of my contemporaries a condescension none of us had earned. He offered a full-year course of lectures on American literature from 1890 to 1940. But as the New Criticism took hold even among those of us who were committed to historical study, this scholar who had dared to give an entire semester to

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twenty-five years of American literature could (without apology) ask students to read and submit their notes on novels that our elders had forgotten and we had never heard of. He seemed to have read and remembered them all. He directed the doctoral thesis that became Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* and the one that became Walter Rideout's *The Radical Novel in the United States, 1900–1954.*

Peter Brier's book concentrates much of its intellectual argument on the ambitious trilogy that crowned Jones's career after he had retired from teaching: *O Strange New World, Revolution and Romanticism,* and *The Age of Energy.* Jones reported in his autobiography that he had conceived the project in the 1920s, when he had hoped to trace the movement of European culture across the Atlantic and across North America. Brier justly represents Jones as a pioneer in delineating the importance of European ideas and their subtle transformation in the development of nineteenth-century American thought and literature.

Because of Brier's own agenda, however, his study of the trilogy, which he calls Jones's masterpiece, reports little about Jones's actual portrait of American culture during the three centuries. The substance of what Jones called his "symphonic" themes in each of the three sturdy volumes appears here in diluted form. Brier wants to gain a hearing for Jones's voice in the current cultural wars. He gives us more about theories of criticism and culture from Aristotle to Hayden White than about the cultural themes in Jones's trilogy. He seems uninterested in the factual evidence that fascinated Jones.

Under the name of liberal humanism, Brier sees Jones's central message: a grateful embrace of cultural history and a commitment to put humane learning to beneficial use in the republic. Brier is at his best when he quotes Jones at his best—when Jones names compassion as "the virtue of the present age," declares that humane studies exist to enrich the meaning of Pauline charity, and calls for a new effort to "sound the heroic note," to

lay hold upon those who have created the humanities. In encouraging right value judgments, humanism, without prejudice to the churches, still makes a central value judgment for all mankind, best phrased by William Blake when he wrote: "The worship of God is: Honoring his gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best."

Brier depicts Jones as a complex man of wisdom who stands between extremes, as Brier himself strives to do in his "Polemical Conclusion." The brief biographical sections and the quotations from Jones himself sometimes bring the vibrant character onto the page. An occasional passage on Jones's view of landscape in Jefferson and James Fenimore Cooper also comes to life. But some of Brier's theoretical passages on whether epic replaces tragedy in Jones's work, and on "the twists and turns of Jones's epic vision," stand in pale contrast to fine quotations from Jones's *The Age of Energy.*

Brier also presents Jones as a man ahead of his time, or at least as one who foresaw some of the dangers of multiculturalism and political correctness. Thus he sets Jones's defense of the humanities in *One Great Society* against the "dogmatic skepticism" in George Levine's recent collection, *Speaking for the Humanities.* The contrast is valid. "The primary duty of the humanist," Jones wrote, "is to consider fashion critically in the light of historical learning, and, achieving a responsible philosophy, to teach such wisdom as he can." And "the aim of higher education," Jones insisted, echoing Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, "is to aid in the formation of an intelligent citizenry who understand at least the rudiments and certainly the responsibility of representative government."

Yet, while I tend to agree with Jones and Brier, Jones's lifelong commitment to history here makes me uneasy about Brier's effort to bring Jones into the 1990s. When Brier tells us "what would have saddened Jones greatly" in statements by a recent committee of the American Council of Learned Societies, he doesn't say whether Jones would have responded at the age of 97 (when the statement appeared in 1989) or 102 in 1994. Nor does Brier speculate on what intellectual, social, and political conditions of the intervening decade after Jones's death might have figured in Jones's response.

With great affection and admiration, I remember Howard Jones as a man in his time and place. He was not primarily a theorist but an American scholar in the Emersonian sense, a voice from the Middle West speaking to learned and unlearned men and women. The

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strength of his voice resounded, sometimes with notable courage, in matters of professional and civic principle. Long before he had tenure, when he had returned from Austin to complete his doctorate at the University of Chicago, he presented himself for the general examination in Comparative Literature but was told that he had to pass several required courses before he could take the doctoral examination. He refused to enroll in courses that he himself had already taught at the University of Texas, and so he left Chicago without the degree. What would have been his dissertation became his book *America and French Culture.* He received a dozen or so honorary degrees, but never a Ph.D. He supported the astronomer Harlow Shapley's effort to rescue European intellectuals from Nazi persecution by finding them posts in American universities. As a prospective visitor at two state universities that required loyalty oaths in the 1950s, he withdrew his name rather than validate the humiliation of his colleagues. He helped to rescue the American Council of Learned Societies. He never abandoned his faith that the United States could absorb and transform the best of European culture, and that the transformation could include what Africans and Asians had also brought and developed here.

Family Court

LOVE AND HATRED: THE STORMY MARRIAGE OF LEO AND SONYA TOLSTOY. *By William L. Shirer. Simon & Schuster. $25.*

Reviewed by DONNA RIFKIND

One of the many epic contradictions in the life of Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy was the passionate youthfulness of his old age. Plagued by illness as he entered his eighties, Tolstoy outran the shadow of death with a vigor that seemed to grow as his expectations for survival withered. A photograph taken two years before he died captures him astride his glossy-coated horse, Délire, dashing across the countryside like a saucy little boy. Another photograph, taken a year later at his country estate, Yasnaya Polyana, shows him playing a fierce game of skittles at the age of eighty-one. A week before his death, in 1910, Leo Tolstoy, internationally famous writer and Russia's most venerable sage, did something dramatic and impetuous that is normally associated only with the very young: he ran away from home.

In William L. Shirer's foreword to his book about the marriage of Leo and Sofya Andreyevna Tolstoy, he writes that he began the volume because "no book in English, as far as I know, has focused on why the last years of this towering genius and his gifted but troubled wife were so tormented and led to such a sorry end."

Yet this is far from uncharted territory. No writer who has ever been drawn to tell the story has failed to recognize the climactic significance of Tolstoy's flight from home and his death in a stationmaster's cottage in the bleak little railway town of Astapovo. Generations of biographers, from Aylmer Maude to Henri Troyat to A. N. Wilson, have tried to do justice to these events, as well as to the years of embattled matrimony that led up to them—have tried, that is, to fashion narratives that read as though they were Tolstoy novels. (In 1990, the poet Jay Parini took the logical next step, publishing a book about the marriage's final years entitled *The Last Station,* which actually is a novel.) The publication in the West of Sofya Tolstoy's diaries, beginning in the 1980s, has given a clearer view of her side of the story and will doubtless encourage still more imaginative retellings.

If Mr. Shirer's belief that he has presented groundbreaking material is implausible, might he have had other reasons for writing this book? It is not surprising that he, a war historian best known for his 1960 work *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,* felt moved to offer his own version of this legendary marital war. Hints of yet another motivation appear in *Love and Hatred*'s dedication, in which Mr. Shirer poignantly thanks his cardiologist for allowing him "to survive the three years it took to finish this book." He died shortly after completing it, at the age of eighty-nine, knowing that this, his fourteenth published volume in a fifty-two-year career, would be his last. Like Tolstoy,

✪ DONNA RIFKIND's book reviews have appeared in the *New York Times Book Review,* the *Washington Post Book World,* and other publications.

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outrunning the shadow of death was plainly not far from Mr. Shirer's own mind.

Tolstoy's desperate last days were spent trying to escape a domestic situation that had become unbearable. The course of his marriage was never smooth, but Tolstoy's differences with his wife—whom he, along with most of his biographers, called Sonya—would not start to become irreconcilable until the later 1870s when he underwent, at around age fifty, the lengthy religious conversion that transformed him from a wealthy, distinguished novelist into a would-be saint with a global following. Sergei Tolstoy, the family's eldest son, wrote of his parents that "the discord between them was in fact the discord between the Leo Tolstoy of the former years before the change in his outlook on life, and the new Leo Tolstoy after that change."

From the time of his wedding in 1862 until just before his conversion, Tolstoy was, to his wife's satisfaction, a country gentleman, a family man, and a writer of magnificent novels and stories. This was an extremely fertile period in his life: in the first fifteen years of marriage, he fathered nine children and wrote and published both *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina.*

Few wives of literary geniuses have ever believed more wholeheartedly in their husbands' work or have done more to support it than Sonya Tolstoy did. Night after night she spent writing out no less than seven separate copies of *War and Peace* from Tolstoy's illegible manuscript; then she advised Tolstoy how to publish the book himself, in six volumes. She devoted nearly the same effort to most of his other books, all while bearing thirteen children and raising the eight who lived, managing the house and farmlands of Tolstoy's estate, serving as hostess to an endless stream of visitors, and performing hundreds of other daily household and business-related chores.

What kind of woman was Sonya Tolstoy, to be equal to these demands? By the age of eleven she had memorized whole passages from Tolstoy's work (already a successful writer, he was a friend of her parents and had known Sonya since she was a tot), and she kept a few copied lines from his book *Childhood* inside her schoolgirl blouse for luck. At eighteen, during her weeklong engagement

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to the thirty-four-year-old Count Tolstoy, this protected middle daughter of a Moscow court physician consented to read her fiancé's diary, an explicit catalogue of his overactive sexual history that shocked her to the roots of her hair.

"I remember how shattered I was by those diaries," Sonya wrote years later; "I wept when I saw what his past had been." Yet she went to the altar anyway. And she continued to read her husband's often painfully frank diary, while he read hers (it was "a perverse form of communication between them," Mr. Shirer writes), throughout the forty-eight years of their marriage.

"The diaries are me," Tolstoy once said. If he was an open book, Sonya was its reader. It was a duty for which this literature-loving woman was perfectly suited, and it gave her great joy. For many years, as long as she maintained this role, she was able to bear many dissatisfactions: her isolation at Yasnaya Polyana, 130 miles from Moscow; Tolstoy's monumental egotism and moodiness; his increasing neglect of the children and his business affairs; and a thousand other complaints. It was not until that role as her husband's most vital resource began to be taken away from her and given to others that their union became the "struggle to the death" that Tolstoy described in a letter to his wife in 1885.

It might be remarked of Tolstoy after his conversion, as Braque once remarked of Picasso, that while he used to be a great artist he was now only a genius. He continued to publish fiction, including a novel, *Resurrection*; a novella, *The Kreutzer Sonata*; and the stories "Master and Man" and "The Death of Ivan Ilich." But these were great works written with a specifically didactic rather than aesthetic purpose. Tolstoy now scorned all his past artistic efforts as frivolous entertainments—he called *Anna Karenina* "an abomination"—and devoted his attention to writing moral tracts.

Turning his back on Sonya's beloved Orthodox church, he drafted plans for an ascetic new Christianity that would be truer to the spirit of the Gospels. He began to preach chastity, the renunciation of private property, non-violent resistance to evil, and vegetarianism. He transferred ownership of his estate and copyrights to his wife and children, and he dressed like his peasants and worked alongside them in the fields.

A throng of disciples gathered around Tolstoy, defiant of the tsar and church leaders who denounced the writer as an anarchist and heretic. Yet the authorities dared not repress him much further, aware that his martyrdom amidst a huge, increasingly ungovernable peasant population would result in widespread revolt. (So great was Tolstoy's worldwide fame that, when the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution broke out, seven years after his death, the Western press misidentified it as a Tolstoyan revolution.)

By the end of the 1880s, the once fruitful partnership of Leo and Sonya Tolstoy was over. Her copyist duties were gradually taken away and divided up between two of her daughters, while most publishing decisions were transferred to Tolstoy's chief disciple, Vladimir Chertkov, an arrogant and shifty former guards officer. Chertkov became Sonya's sworn enemy, competing with her for Tolstoy's affection, fighting with her for a first look at his manuscripts and diary entries, insisting that Sonya was evil and deranged and an obstacle to the Master's lifework. According to her diary, Chertkov once shouted at her that if he had such a wife as Sonya "he would have shot himself or run away to America."

Along with these humiliations, Sonya had to live with Tolstoy's inability to follow his own precepts. The year he began to preach chastity, he impregnated her for the tenth time (the total number of her pregnancies was sixteen); and, although he noisily claimed to despise the idea of private property, he continued to live more or less the same leisurely country-squire life he had always maintained. While he condemned Sonya for her earthly attachments, he was unable to give up his own.

This hypocrisy infuriated Sonya. Although she ridiculed it, she nonetheless feared for her future comfort and that of her children as Tolstoy threatened to uproot the aristocratic way of life into which they had been born. She was horror-struck by his longing to give the income from his estate and writings to the peasants. She immediately rejected his suggestion that Yasnaya Polyana be turned into a kind of Shaker commune in which Chertkov and other disciples would be invited to dwell.

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To Sonya's frequent unhappy outbursts Tolstoy practiced a malevolent form of nonviolent resistance, alternately ignoring her, vowing to leave home, loftily expressing pity for her, and launching poisonous complaints against her in his diaries, which were often available for all at the estate to see. He did little to stop the increasingly intense struggles between Chertkov and Sonya for control of his copyrights and diaries, although he warned them that the conflict would kill him. Where Sonya's battle tactics tended to be loud and hysterical, Tolstoy's were stubbornly silent. His fierce passivity was often far more effective than curses or blows.

Painfully aware of her reputation as the shrewish wife of a celebrated prophet, Sonya fought back with endless resourcefulness. Now that she was no longer Tolstoy's main reader, she became instead, quite self-consciously, a character one might glimpse in his fiction, promising more than once to throw herself under a train like Anna Karenina, or to freeze to death in the snowy woods as a character had in "Master and Man."

She became a spy, snooping among Tolstoy's papers and following his carriage in and out of the estate. She tried to arouse Tolstoy's jealousy by cultivating an infatuation for an effete pianist named Tanayev. She insisted that the family doctor had tried to poison her and pretended to drink poison herself. In the summer of 1910, a few months before Tolstoy left home for the last time, Sonya packed her bags and tried to run away. She left behind a letter to Tolstoy ("You have exchanged me for Chertkov") and a press release she had composed for the newspapers ("In peaceful Yasnaya Polyana an extraordinary event has occurred. . . .") Her son Andrei met her at the train station and drove her back to the estate without a struggle.

Tolstoy saved his own moment of high drama for the bitter end. Ill, exhausted, desperate, he stole out of the house in the freezing pre-dawn hours of October 28, 1910. Accompanied by his doctor and his youngest daughter, and soon joined by Chertkov, he traveled by train as far as Astapovo before he collapsed and was put to bed in a stationmaster's cottage. The local and foreign press jumped on the story as Sonya and her children chartered a private train to this obscure place, now overrun with hundreds of journalists, peasants, and policemen. For days, Sonya was not allowed to enter the cottage. At last, she was admitted inside, after Tolstoy had lost consciousness forever. He died three hours later, on November 7, 1910. Among the last words he uttered had been: "It is necessary to escape."

Was this, as Mr. Shirer writes, "one of the worst marriages that ever was"? Tolstoy wrote in *War and Peace* that "pure and complete sorrow is as impossible as pure and complete joy." For Tolstoy and his wife, sorrow and joy, hatred and love were virtually inextricable. For every terrible fact of their life there was a miraculous fact. Without his monstrous egotism there would have been no *Anna Karenina*, a novel in which, in its most inspired passages, Tolstoy transmutes his own self-absorption into the richest art. Without Sonya's overbearing control, Tolstoy might never have found an orderly environment in which to write at all.

Mr. Shirer's account is occasionally repetitious, often careless with details, yet written with a passion to match that of his subjects. His final book may not adequately answer the question of whether the Tolstoy marriage was a mistake or a triumph. But it does offer a corrective to those of us who might be foolish enough to believe that passion—for other people, for revenge, for a good story, for life itself—necessarily reaches its pinnacle in youth rather than in old age.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

DR. JOHNSON AND MR. SAVAGE. *By Richard Holmes. Pantheon. $23.*

Reviewed by PETER SCHWENDENER

The subject of Richard Holmes's *Dr. Johnson and Mr. Savage* is not the life of Samuel Johnson or that of the poet Richard Savage but the theory and practice of biography as a literary form. It pursues the subject by working its way through Johnson's 1744 *Life of Mr. Richard Sav-*

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Savage, concentrating on the literary and other choices Johnson made as he worked.

The book does not pretend to be a full account of Johnson's two-year friendship with Savage, yet it is obliged to set the scene to enable the reader to follow its argument about biography. Johnson came to London from Lichfield in 1737 and met Savage, who was well known for two things: his claim, which often appeared in his poetry, to be "the bastard son of the Earl Rivers"; and his arrest for murder in 1727 (he was found guilty and received the Royal Pardon in 1728). When Johnson sat down to write the life of Savage in 1744, a year after Savage's death, his main source for the early parts of the life was a document known as the "Newgate" booklet, an anonymous defense of Savage published shortly after the murder.

As Holmes writes, Johnson accepts the version of the life in the pamphlet "without question, and without investigation," including its account of the cruel mother, Lady Macclesfield, who would not acknowledge Savage as her son. Johnson writes:

> This Mother is still alive, and may perhaps even yet, though her Malice was so often defeated, enjoy the Pleasure of reflecting, that the Life which she often endeavoured to destroy, was at least shortened by her Maternal offices; that though she could not transport her Son to the Plantations, bury him in the Shop of a Mechanick, or hasten the Hand of the public Executioner, she has yet had the Satisfaction of imbittering all his Hours, and forcing him into Exigencies, that hurried on his Death.

To Holmes, this suggests "a fictional rather then a biographic creation." In Johnson's hands the real Lady Macclesfield, who, when he wrote about her, was "a rich, sad, and reclusive widow in her late seventies" (she never sued for libel) becomes a "force of destiny" like Lady Macbeth. It is an example, to adapt a famous passage from Johnson's *Rasselas*, of "that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon biography."

Holmes's method throughout the book is to observe the disparity between Savage as an "obscure, minor poet" and Savage as he appears in Johnson's *Life*. At some point in his attempt to present the facts, Holmes believes, Johnson became enamored of Savage as an image of "the Outcast." In one of the most famous passages in the biography, Savage is described wandering through London at night:

> He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses, which are set open at night to any casual wanderers; sometimes in cellars, among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble; and sometimes, when he had no money to support even the expenses of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk, or in the winter with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glass-house.

The effect of such passages derives, Holmes argues, from the novel connection Johnson makes between Savage's poverty and his poetry. Although Johnson is quite hardheaded about Savage in some parts of the *Life*, in others he is as much a victim of mythology as were many who knew Savage or had read about him.

The real Savage, as Holmes attempts to recreate him from various sources (many ignored or accepted uncritically by Johnson), was a dedicated promoter of his own poetry and glamorous plight as an orphan. During part of the time that he was supposed to be destitute in London, he was living in a country house in Richmond, working on his philosophic poem *The Wanderer*. This suggests "a curious double-life" that doesn't appear in Johnson, as do reports by contemporaries such as the poet James Thomson, who complains in a letter about Savage's public aggressiveness. Regarding the 1727 murder trial, Holmes attempts to show that "at the least . . . Savage was far more guilty of the crime than Johnson is prepared to allow."

Johnson severely states at one point that the "reigning error" of Savage's life "was that he mistook the love for the practice of virtue, and was indeed not so much a good man as the friend of goodness." The force of this statement obliges Johnson to find subtle, almost devious ways of establishing Savage's claims on the reader's sympathy. When he reaches the critical episode of the murder trial, he gets through it by blurring "the exact line between the reportorial or factual voice and the dramatic or projected one."

The will to truth in an absolute, non-literary

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sense is at war throughout Johnson's writing with an acute sensitivity to what people will pay to read. The will to truth, which as biographers beginning with Boswell have shown was almost neurotically intense in Johnson, could only be overridden by the demands inherent in whatever kind of writing he happened to be doing. The reason his scruples about telling the truth did not overcome him in writing about Savage was that he was working in what Holmes calls "a new hybrid, non-fiction form of enormous energy and potential." This may be claiming too much for the *Life of Savage*, yet it does not seem too much to say, as Holmes does, that "in Johnson's hands, biography became a rival to the novel." An analogy Holmes seems on the verge of making several times is to the dramatic monologue in poetry, in which a character who is typically dubious morally is presented in such a way that the reader's moral sense is held at bay by sympathy.

Holmes believes that "biography itself, with its central tenet of empathy, is essentially a romantic form; and that Johnson's friendship with Savage first crystallized its perils and its possibilities." The friendship, about which almost nothing is definitely known ("It was, from the start, an invisible friendship"), lies, in Holmes's opinion, at the heart of the *Life of Mr. Richard Savage*, even though Johnson largely avoids references to himself. The "central tenet of empathy" takes over in the courtroom scenes and elsewhere, making Savage a conductor for Johnson's private thoughts and feelings. Holmes writes:

> Johnson was not interested in what a modern biographer would call "research." He did not even attempt to investigate the circumstances of Savage's birth, or walk over to St. Andrew's, Holborn, to examine Savage's baptismal register.

He was instead intent on "transforming his private feelings into a public and commercially acceptable biography."

Richard Holmes's title, based on the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, intends to suggest that biography is a vaguely schizophrenic form of writing in which the moral urge to avoid fiction fights the requirement of empathy at every step. Its "perils" are aberrations of truth telling or empathy, meaning the numb-

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ing recital of facts or mere leniency as opposed to real understanding. The impulse to write about someone else plainly fascinates Holmes, whose right to speculate about these matters is amply defended by his own biographies of Shelley and Coleridge. At times, however, his psychology is unconvincing, as when he traces Johnson's rough handling of Lady Macclesfield to "his own romantic disappointments, surely aggravated by his physical grotesqueness and sexual awkwardness as a young man." He also tends to underrate the extent to which the pre-Boswellian figure of an emotionally unstable, in some ways bohemian Johnson has always been taken for granted: in his 1962 book *Samuel Johnson and His Times*, M. J. C. Hodgart could compare him to Rimbaud without seeming too absurd.

At the heart of Holmes's argument is a distinction between classical biography, the aim of which is to arrive at a judgment of character, and Romantic biography, whose aim is the expression, in part, of the biographer's personality. Holmes sees these two aims at war throughout the *Life of . . . Savage*, especially its last two paragraphs. The penultimate one reads:

> Those are no proper judges of his conduct who have slumbered away their time on the down of plenty, nor will a wise man presume to say, "Had I been in Savage's condition, I should have lived, or written, better than Savage."

The last paragraph reverts to the classical practice of holding up the life as a warning that "nothing will supply the want of prudence, and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible."

Holmes frankly romanticizes things by finding real conviction in the "no proper judges" passage and only a "conciliatory gesture to the forces of social opinion" in the last words. To buttress his presentation of Johnson as a Romantic biographer, if not a Romantic, he adduces as evidence the fact that, in correcting the *Life* for its second edition, he wrote against the last passage the single word, "Added." The last paragraph has a winding, nervous quality that gives some weight to what Holmes says, but it seems more than merely politic. It is, after all, a fact that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible. Johnson does not try to harmonize the aims of "empathy" and judgment but simply leaves them unresolved; as his mouthpiece Imlac says in *Rasselas*, "Inconsistencies cannot both be right; but, imputed to man, they may both be true."

An image, myth, or archetype (take your pick) of "the Outcast" does, however, dominate the *Life of . . . Savage*, and Holmes makes the reader aware of how much it arises from the nature of biography as a literary form. Biography has a tendency to impose some version of the Outcast theme on its subjects even if they are not outcasts; no biography, even of a politician or talk-show host, can be without a dark night of the soul. There even seems to be a mildly blasphemous element in biography, a tendency to assimilate the story that is being told to the Life of Christ: Holmes brings this out, perhaps inadvertently, when he refers to the "stations" of Savage's suffering in Johnson's narrative. It is safe to say, however, that Johnson, in the *Life of . . . Savage* and elsewhere, has all tendencies in this direction under fairly strict control. He does not expose himself to what Holmes calls the "perils" of biography, even if he demonstrates empathy for Savage. His sense of the difference between fact and fiction is uncomfortably sharp, and this, more than his style of writing or orthodox Christianity, makes him an oddity to most modern readers. He cannot be nudged into the Romantic camp, though the writing about Johnson in this century has apparently yet to forsake its mission of converting him to some version of Romanticism.

By showing how biography as a literary form naturally gravitates to dubious moral specimens such as Savage, Holmes allows the reader to make sense of how biography conducts itself today. It may be "essentially a Romantic"—that is, an expressive, even religious, form of writing—yet it is also one of the more undisguisedly commercial kinds of writing, fed by scandalous, usually sexual or financial, disclosures. Biography's inherently sensational aspects exist in uneasy combination with a desire to find what Holmes calls "a recognizable human truth." Biography as a form is, in short, something of an enigma, and this book does justice to its curiously freckled character.

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CONTROVERSY

The Press and the Prose: An Exchange

BENJAMIN W. FORTSON IV

I wish to comment on some of the remarks made by Jacques Barzun in his interesting and engaging article, "The Press and the Prose" (THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Autumn 1994), which recently came to my attention. While I am in agreement with many of the points Professor Barzun raises, he casts a number of what I feel are unfair aspersions on the field of linguistics, particularly regarding its putative role in debates concerning "correctness" in language and language change.

Concerning attempts (such as his) at regulating changes to the language (for "the language" one must always read "standard written English," more on which below), Professor Barzun writes:

> But it is only fair to warn that an effort of this kind (concerted) would meet with protest from one powerful vested interest, the linguists. For exactly a century they have been waging war against restraint. Their motto is "Anything Goes"; one authority among them affirmed it: "no native speaker can make a mistake." The reason behind the dogma is that since language has always changed and many changes have been due to lapses from usage, all lapses are and ought to be free and equal.
>
> The interest I have called vested consists in collecting and recording these changes; it is a quasi-scientific sport like bird-watching, and it affords the same sense of superiority and pride in lecturing the laity. Only, this sport with language disregards the purpose for which language is made, a purpose that requires if not fixity of usage, which is impossible, at least steadiness and slow change. To cheer deviation and urge it on to higher speed, while also rebuking those who want to reduce it, is thus a deliberate assault on culture. It is moreover an attempt to deny the critics of misuse their equal right to denounce lapses and to keep their words clear.

Dismissing the field of linguistics (or, more specifically in this case, historical linguistics, which concerns itself with studying language change) as a "pseudo-science" is quite simply false. Scientific enterprises are efforts to formulate general rules and principles about observable phenomena of the empirical world. A physicist studies a set of data (the behavior of bodies in motion, say) to deduce general properties of the physical universe that underlie that behavior (laws of motion, for instance). Linguists are no different; the data they study is the linguistic output of human beings, in an effort to deduce general properties of the human language faculty, and therefore of human cognition. The language faculty is what sets Homo sapiens apart from every other known species of life. Linguists seek to understand the cognitive properties that allow members of our species, upon exposure to acoustic signals (speech) from older humans around us, by the age of a few years not only to have made sense of those signals in a way that squirrel or chimpanzee babies could not have (that is, to have figured out boundaries between words, syntactic structures, etc.), but also to have constructed in our heads a means whereby we can likewise communicate in ways that are infinitely creative and not simply imitative.

One subset of the linguistic data to be studied is language change. As Professor Barzun recognizes, all natural human languages change, and language change is therefore another empirically observable fact that should form a subject for scientific inquiry: Why do we see some types of change over and over again, but not others? Why do such "confu-

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sions" arise between say *flaunt* and *flout,* or *gantlet* and *gauntlet?* To begin to answer such questions, we need to posit hypotheses and to gather data to test them—the standard route that scientists take. Such directed gathering of data and testing of hypotheses is a far cry from bird-watching.

But linguists, historical or otherwise, do not—*pace* Professor Barzun—"cheer deviation and urge it on to higher speed, while also rebuking those who want to reduce it." We do not *need* to urge "deviation" on to higher speed: it goes on all around us every day in every community on the globe, without any cheering or urging from us. Contrary to Professor Barzun's charges against us, any linguist would agree that the rules of Standard English are to be followed in those contexts where standard written English is the agreed-upon medium of communication. His preceding statement, that linguists' activity "disregards the purpose for which language is devised," exhibits a confusion between the notion of a standard written language (consisting of an entirely arbitrary, conventionalized set of prescriptive rules that must be learned formally in school) and the notion of language as a naturally occurring system of communication, learned by children in their first years without formal instruction (no less governed by rules than the other kind of "language," but here the rules are abstract, unconscious, and form the object of linguistic inquiry).

The distinction drawn above is crucial if we are to come to a sensible understanding of the issues surrounding "correctness." Professor Barzun writes,

> I am not in the least bothered by the mistakes due to carelessness. . . . A plural subject with a verb in the singular; a dangling participle; the inconsistent "one of those who is"; . . .—none of this is mortal sin, because in spite of rocky grammar and inelegance it does no permanent harm to the language. . . . Serious damage begins when important words are used with false meanings or misleading connotations.

"Correctness" in language, in the sense that Professor Barzun intends (but see below), where various forms of "incorrectness" can do "harm" to the "language," is again a notion only applicable (if at all) to the realm of standardized forms of communication—in this case, standard written English. In such a context it is wholly defensible—at least in the short term—to allow certain usages and to forbid certain others, as a standard written language is an entirely artificial construct in the first place. (That is why literary languages can survive as essentially fossilized entities for centuries or millennia after they cease to reflect everyday spoken language: one may think of Latin, which still survives to some extent as a medium of religious and scholarly discourse; or Classical Sanskrit in India; or Sumerian in the Ancient Near East, which continued to be used as an international written language for a good two thousand years after it had become extinct as a spoken language.) What people speak on the street, at home, or wherever else, is an entirely different matter, and it is this that linguists are interested in studying, and that undergoes constant change.

Professor Barzun writes, "The linguists' crusade is often carried on under the flag of democratic freedom, with the corollary that any expression is as fit as another." This is in principle true, but again the frame of reference for this "corollary" is not the same as the one in which Professor Barzun is operating (the standard written language). Rather, it is the spoken language where linguists will tell you that all forms of human speech are created equal, and that there is no such thing as a "primitive language," or an "inferior dialect." It has been amply demonstrated in the linguistic literature that no matter what the dialect, it systematically allows certain constructions and not others, just as is the case with Standard English. Professor Barzun must be aware of this fact as well when he writes, "If a novelist makes a character say: 'I ain't fixin' to go,' the linguist pounces with the proof that the *right* phrasing is: 'I ain't fixin'*for* to go.' All of us react the same way when we come across English attempts to reproduce American slang. There is something, after all, to the feeling of right and wrong in speech." However, equality does not mean interchangeability: Standard English has particular spheres of use in which other forms of English (or any other language) are not socially appropriate.

Turning for a moment to the examples of change in English (or "damage" to "the English language") adduced by Professor Barzun, it may be of interest to note that every one of these exemplifies various types of

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change known from every language in the world whose history is recorded. Subsuming them all under the rubric of "lapses," "laziness," or "ignorance" is pre-scientific; this completely ignores, first of all, the fact that many changes, in particular sound changes, are entirely regular and systematic (a fact that permits scientific comparison of related languages, such as those comprising the Indo-European, Semitic, or Algonquian families, in order to reconstruct their histories); and second, the fact that, as noted above, certain kinds of change are encountered frequently in the world's languages, while others are entirely absent. We certainly do not have all the answers, otherwise we historical linguists would be out of business; we cannot say in all cases why a particular change happened, even if we can trace all its steps. I can tell you, for instance, that saying *flaunt the law* for *flout the law* falls into a well-known type of change, whereby a word that is fairly common (*flaunt*) replaces a word of very similar phonetic shape (*flout*) that occurs (for many speakers, at least) only in one fixed phrase (*flaut the law* or *flout the rules*), where it had essentially lost its status as an independent lexical item. The whole meaning of the phrase *fl—t the law* has not changed, merely its morphological transparency; communication is not in the least affected (Professor Barzun's great fear). One may compare, for instance, the word *hussy*, which was originally (in Middle English) a compound of *house* and *wife* (in the older meaning "woman," as in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*), meaning simply what those two words put together would mean; over time the meaning of the compound changed to refer to a particular kind of woman in a particular kind of house, becoming free, as it were, of the meanings of its constituent parts taken individually. The result is that certain sound changes that occurred in Middle English and later (loss of final *-f* and reduction of vowels in unstressed final syllables, among others) operated without the word being re-created as a transparent compound *house-wife*, for it was no longer seen to be semantically a compound of the words *house* and *wife*. Eventually, a new compound with an entirely different meaning, the *housewife* of today (note with the modern meaning of the word *wife*, no longer simply "woman"), entered the language, and no speaker of Modern English who has not looked up the etymology of the word would ever dream that *hussy* has anything to do with *housewife*. I can tell you all this and trace the steps, and give you a probable proximate cause for each additional change; but at every turn, any of a number of developments would have been possible, each one contingent upon a complex and, at each point in history, unique web of sociolinguistic relationships. The point of all this is, there is much more behind linguistic change than fogginess of particular human intellects in a speech community.

I am not saying that a change such as *flout the law >flaunt the law* is "correct" or "incorrect"; from the point of view of Standard English, it is of course incorrect and nonsensical. In fifty or a hundred years, who knows? The word *pervert* meant "apostate" until the early 1900s; one Dean Farrar, writing in 1879, referred to St. Paul as "that audacious pervert," a usage which today would raise more than a few eyebrows, as using the word with today's meaning would have done in 1879. I must express complete ignorance as to how and when to "allow" new words, meanings, and constructions to enter Standard English. All standard written languages change slowly, but change they must if they are to continue to bear any resemblance to the spoken language. (They need not, but there is a practical advantage to a smaller, rather than greater, disparity between the two as far as ease of acquisition of the standard is concerned.) We have texts in Sumerian that decry the desuetude into which "the language" has fallen, how inferior it has become to what it used to be. In any culture where the paragons of literary art are creations of several centuries' age, the language of that earlier time is easily viewed as being more beautiful, more perfect, less corrupt, less impure. But the beauty we respond to is the genius that these artists brought to bear in crafting the speech of their day into vehicles of literary expression; their medium—the speech of their day—was no more nor less "correct" than our speech. Professor Barzun need not fear that any "permanent harm" will be done to the language through its undergoing change, unless it be true that Shakespeare's diction is a witness to the "permanent harm" that change had wrought on English in the seven centuries separating him from Alfred the Great.

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Attitudes and Assumptions

JACQUES BARZUN

The passage to which Mr. Fortson objects deals only with what I see as the harmful effects of the linguists' ideology. It does not deal with their achievements since the early 1800s, nor does it single them out as the sole agents hastening change in modern languages. I cite also poets and novelists, journalists and advertisers. Every profession in the course of what it considers its proper exercise produces undesirable side effects which it is permissible to criticize. Lawyers and doctors are the commonest targets, but scientists, professors, artists, and historians are not immune to blame.

Each group has what I have ventured to call an ideology, a set of atttitudes and assumptions that affect the surrounding culture. For example, when linguistics—then called philology—made its stunning debut with the work of Grimm, Bopp, Sir William Jones, Pott, and Max Müller, the notion of an Aryan race as the parent of the great European languages set off the theorizing that culminated in "scientific" racism, and this not only in Germany but throughout Europe.

Cultural damage is not intended; it happens. The dogmas of race superiority based on language have been discredited, but when in the 1890s all the students of society wanted to be thought scientists, the linguists were already sure that they were. Since then, sociology, anthropology, and the rest have grown more sober, but not linguistics. Witness Mr. Fortson, who tells us that the linguist deals with language as the physicist does with matter.

That is the governing assumption that I deprecate, and as it does not stand alone, I can refute Mr. Fortson's assertions only by examining in some detail the system they belong to. The linguist is not comparable to the physicist because the linguist's material is not stable or uniform. Indeed, the linguist's first and true declaration is that language is ever-changing, though the next, "nobody must fiddle with it," is gratuitous. The physicist, who fiddles freely to ascertain properties, can rely on their staying put and thus can measure their interrelations. That is why science can predict. Linguistics can neither predict the course of change nor explain its multiform processes.

To be sure, Grimm, and later Verner, established some "laws" of sound-change, but such regularities are few compared to the innumerable kinds of change that occur, and these are not so much explained as redescribed—confusion of similars, slurring, contraction, but no set of "laws" covering the whole ground. "Seven oaks" turned into the name Snooks but this does not foretell that "Seven up" will wind up as Snup. A trivial example, but why did Low Latin get transformed into five Romance languages and five associated idioms, though the populations were contiguous? To put the same fact another way, language drifts and shifts under numberless influences that vary at different times and places. Its alterations are not totally determined by its inherent properties like the evolution of a star.

Earlier in this century linguists boasted that they, first among social scientists, had discovered the bedrock unit of their science, the phoneme. This is presumably the single indivisible sound that can be isolated in a word. But soon the phoneme received at least four different definitions. The atom is not defined in four different ways. There are schools of linguistics, as there are of all the social sciences. There is only one physics.

What is the cultural point here? Simply that the linguists' assumption of authority rests on uncertain ground. They declare much that is true and interesting, but the use they make of it is often arbitrary and deplorable. It is such a use that has brought about the disarray of grammar in the schools. No doubt the old grammars had faults, but they were at least intent on teaching. The new grammars, variously based on half a dozen different doctrines, are huge tomes with different terminologies. The loss of a common one is itself anti-pedagogic. "But," we are told, "the old one falsified. It echoed the Latin. Latin is not English. And no simplified scheme will do." The fact remains that students who take even a little Latin today know more English grammar than those who struggle with the full-sci-

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ence texts. The effect on the culture at large is a weakening of the sense of order in language, which in turn perpetuates muddled thought.

Beginning as a physicist, the linguist then turns biologist: he talks about the "life of language." This metaphor goes with the doctrine that "the language" means only the spoken word. The written is not alive; it is artificial; Mr. Fortson refers to it as "fossilized." The corollary is that writers have no business discussing the living tongue. "Who are you laymen to interfere? Protests have always been futile. The language will go its own way." In short, you are an enemy of "life."

The thought occurs that if nothing can divert the juggernaut of speech, there is no point in calling down those who criticize its course. Yet linguists miss no opportunity of assailing the critics with sarcasm and hauteur. A recent book by a professor at MIT repeats the scolding and the slogan: "We show how people talk, not how they ought to talk."

That is the third false assumption. Who are this people? The diversity among speakers is infinite and unchartable. Many, perhaps most people talk in fragments. They by-pass syntax and thus make nonsense of the linguists' "descriptive grammar." The words are unpredictable in shape or use, which makes nonsense of linguists' dictionaries: where do they list the weatherman's "light *vurrible* wind?" Where shall we find noted and cherished the two words *"Stru, innit?"* Only in a novel, of course.

Now, any of us might at some point hear himself saying those very words, for Mr. Fortson's segregation of "standard" from popular speech, though convenient, is unreal. On the White House tapes, President Nixon talks standard and low-life—very low-life—intertwined. In the "at home and at work" speech that Mr Fortson claims as the linguists' preserve, the long words of modern life are familiar and some of the short words that blur *(flout, flaunt)* are quite unfamiliar.

The linguists' "how people speak" is therefore a construct, legitimate enough, from things heard on the air and on the ground, eked out with what gets on paper—letters from ordinary citizens to a government bureau or to the press, the press itself, and dialogue in fiction. Speech taped in deliberate surveys is not certifiably spontaneous or representative. When *Webster's International Dictionary,* 3rd edition, came out it affirmed that "many cultivated speakers" used *ain't* when talking seriously but informally. This strange report was based on six cases recorded in one area of the Middle West. The dogma that would make "spoken language" a tautology thus seems less scientific than politico-social. It too dates from the 1890s when a populist mood among intellectuals inspired the "new history" and the social sciences. History must forget leaders and great men and study the people. Likewise: speech, not writing.

Unfortunately, the history of language refutes this cavalier exclusion. To begin with, until the time of mechanical recording and broadcasting, linguists had no choice but to rely heavily on the written word. Next, since the invention of printing, writers have had an enormous influence on language. In the fifteenthth and sixteenth centuries, the enthusiasm for the ancient classics caused a large-scale manufacture of new Greek and Latin derivatives. Rabelais is full of them—for ridicule—since he thought most of them absurd. But the present vocabulary of the European tongues depends on these writers' inventions, now commonplace. In the same period, Luther's and others' translations of the Bible made their choice of words and forms common usage for millions of the faithful.

In the next century, a very small group of French poets and amateurs, disliking the Renaissance splurge, decided to "purify" speech and prose. (Dryden did much the same for English.) Right or wrong, they succeeded in paring down the vocabulary into the shape it has pretty much kept until quite recently, when writers again—namely journalists—have substantially Americanized French and other European languages. What people read every morning they tend to speak in the afternoon.

Great writers have made a difference too. The linguists' hackneyed example, Swift, wrote a paper against a new mania for shortening; his examples included *mob. Mob* has survived, which proves him wrong. But his objection has been sustained, which proves him right. We no longer say *phizz, pozz, plenipo,* and the rest. On the positive side, writers such as Sir Thomas Browne, Walter Scott, and Coleridge have added valuable words for ideas not clearly discerned before. Writers are anything but hostile to useful novelties, learned or popular; there is continual circulation be-

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tween Standard and popular; "speakers" is an inclusive term.

One wishes that linguists would respect history and acknowledge this long partnership of the careful and careless, who are found in all classes of society. Perhaps populist conviction prevents, certainly scientific pretension does; it forbids attending to quality: the aesthetics of language. That words can be more or less apt, vigorous, evocative; that nice distinctions add power to prose and are essential to poetry, scientism will not admit.

Hence the refusal to concede loss or damage. True science is not so stoical. The physicist does not maintain that collision with an asteroid will leave us all as comfortable as before. The linguists' indifference amounts to denying language any purpose, such as accurate expression. Long ago, my friend and colleague, Professor Allen Walker Read, whose scholarship I admire and whose ideology I deplore, stated this denial in the title of an article: "A Native Speaker Cannot Make A Mistake." This endorsement of error is the spirit that animates the free-for-all I discussed in my essay. One may well wonder why it is only a native who is licensed—why not a foreigner, or a child, whose parents and teachers unwisely correct his—forgive me—mistakes? For Read's Law surely implies that in language alone of all human activities practice is always perfect.

Despite this rule of laisser-faire, people—ordinary people—still want to know how they should talk and what words mean: they buy dictionaries and scan the Words column in the *Readers' Digest*. And many are startled when, reading in the *New York Times* about a near-crash, they find that to make his landing the pilot flew the plane *perpendicular* to the highway. Was the reporter exercising his rights as a native? Ah, but that was a technical word, like the *parallel* that he SHOULD have used. To the conscious mind all words are technical terms for the things it wants to utter.

To sum up, the assumptions and attitudes of the linguists in our century have tended to sanctify and accelerate the ordinary drift toward confusion. Mr. Fortson is surprised at my saying so. The evidence is to be found in the routine remarks about change and by implication in Read's Law, as well as in all the derision against the interfering laity. A singular effort that failed is a work by the late Alfred Meillet, a linguist of highest repute. His research led him to believe that of the two kinds of simple past tense in French, the one called *défini*, used in narrative and spoken by the (negligible) well-educated, was doomed. To assist its demise, when M. Meillet came to write a short history of the Greek language he denied himself the use of this form altogether. The result was sentences equivalent to: "Demosthenes has made a speech against Philip of Macedon. It has not pleased everybody." Today, half a century later, the ostracized *passé défini* is found in every newspaper, every novel, every lecture; it is spoken on formal occasions, and it is the title of a political weekly.

Communication is hard enough, language is full enough of traps, without writers and speakers' having to obey the "scientific" injunction to mutely accept all stumbles and fashions. Nobody denies change; reasonable people want to keep it as slow as possible. The right reading of literature and its enjoyment are so dependent on the maintenance of meanings that common sense dictates using all means to keep the accidents of change to a minimum. I would add that the linguistic ideology, which condemns these propositions, is regrettable also because it obscures what the great linguists down to Delbrück, Henry Sweet, Boas, Sapir, Jespersen, Brunot, and Meillet have done to enlighten us about the thousands of tongues that make Man the Articulate Being par excellence.

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The Reader Replies

America and Its Discontents

The article "America and Its Discontents" by Oscar and Lilian Handlin in the Winter 1995 AMERICAN SCHOLAR was certainly "stimulating." Some good points were made, but the general tone was worthy of another historian, namely Newt Gingrich. I shall confine my comments to this sentence: "Textbooks and monographs proved that never in human history had so evil a country as the United States existed." At least, the word "Some" or the expression "A few" should have come first.

I write as a person who has helped edit three textbooks on U.S. history for a prominent publisher. Perhaps, in a single case, I found too much criticism of our past but, even in that book, there is no justification for the sentence quoted. I also write as one who has taught the basic American history survey course during three decades for the University of Maryland's European program. I had to use some eight or more different textbooks. Admittedly, the volumes employed in recent years were more critical of our past than the ones during the earlier period but, again, the Handlins' statement would not apply to any one of them.

I would be prepared to defend at least these ten propositions:

1) In colonial America and long after 1776, the Indians or Native Americans were badly treated.

2) The same applies to Blacks or Afro-Americans. As late as 1860, fifteen states had slavery.

3) For a long time, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were violated, especially in the South. Veterans who had fought to "make the world safe for democracy" were lynched in their own country.

4) Until at least the Wagner Act of 1935, union members in the U.S.A. faced immense obstacles. Guilty or not, the men executed at the time of the Haymarket Riot did not get a fair trial. The same thing for Sacco and Vanzetti.

5) There has been considerable violence in the U.S.A., not only in the West but also in various cities.

6) Orientals have been mistreated as late as the Immigration Act of 1924 and the confinement of American citizens into camps during World War II.

7) The U.S.A. was more guilty than Mexico for the war of 1846–1848 . . . and then did not fully observe the treaty signed.

8) The U.S.A. was at least as guilty as Spain for the 1898 war. A conflict which was to "free" Cuba made that country a satellite of ours under the Platt Amendment.

9) We have criticized the imperialism of other countries but have had our own, with such things as the (Theodore) Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

10) Though the U.S.A. did not sign the Geneva Peace Agreement of 1954, it promised to respect it. In fact, we violated it.

Americans are now urging the Germans, Japanese, and Russians to "come clean" about their sins in new textbooks. Certainly we should continue to honor the men who froze at Valley Forge, bled at Gettysburg, drowned at Omaha Beach, died in Korea, the persons with vision, from Roger Williams to General Marshall, from Abigail Adams to Eleanor Roosevelt, and beyond. Nevertheless, out of respect for our First Amendment, we should not try to hide the dark episodes.

As one who has subscribed to THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR for over half a century, I regret that it published an article which might be summarized as: "Muzzle the critics; back to Muzzey," whose textbook I had to read in high school. I hope and believe that you will publish many contradictory letters, even if they won't have the same wide audience as the original essay.

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LILIAN AND OSCAR HANDLIN reply: Current textbooks structured in the form of debating agendas repeat the errors of their predecessors—except along political lines now more fashionable. There are some elements of truth in the letter writer's litany but deprived of a sense of context or comparison.

The list's censorious tone and moral outrage do not teach how to think, evaluate, and contextualize events. Its version of history reflects a currently popular stance—self-satisfied and smug, holding the past accountable for not having attained the level of sensitivity, insight, and high moral ground of the present. To teach students that American slavery was an evil without comparing it to other forms of this millenial-old labor system, which transcended color lines, fails to teach them much. American imperialism was also of a certain kind—incomprehensible without comparison with other, more consequential versions—such as that of the Incas and the Aztecs, the British, or the Soviets.

Otherwise pupils will remain ignorant, angry, and vulnerable to propaganda. Mr. Sinsheimer may find this a worthy educational goal especially when the propaganda line meets with his approval. He ought to remember however that such a frame of mind can easily be turned in directions he would deplore.

Surely that is not a goal either he, or textbook publishers, ought to pursue.

The Story of a Classic

Joseph Gerard Brennan's fine essay in the Spring 1995 issue on Lucy Maud Montgomery and *Anne of Green Gables* may need a small correction.

Professor Brennan writes, "Like her creator, Anne lived in a quiet conservative society—that of Prince Edward Island ten years or so before the Great War." It's certainly natural to read *Anne* as if she had been set in the time the book appeared—I did myself the first couple of times I read it—but I believe Mollie Gillen says flatly that the book is set in the late nineteenth century, the time of Maud Montgomery's own childhood. And Gillen's thesis accounts for some internal evidence that doesn't square with a turn-of-the-century setting.

One of these pieces of evidence has, in a sense, to do with something not happening: Had the book been set in the Edwardian age, Gilbert Blythe would have been young enough to serve in the Great War himself, instead of losing a son to it. The other has to do with Anne's redeeming herself in the eyes of the Barry family after she accidentally gets her friend Diana drunk.

Anne saves the Barrys' baby from an attack of croup while almost all the adults in Avonlea are in Charlottetown listening to a speech by a Canadian prime minister. Describing the event to Anne the next day, Marilla says, "Well, he never got to be Premier on account of his looks. Such a nose as that man had! But he can speak. I was proud of being a Conservative. Rachel Lynde, of course, being a Liberal, had no use for him." The description points strongly to Sir John Alexander Macdonald, prime minister of Canada from Confederation in 1867 (of which he is widely considered the father) until 1873, and again from 1878 to 1891. The sheer novelty of seeing a Canadian prime minister in the flesh would seem to belong more to the 1870s than the 1900s as well.

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JOSEPH GERARD BRENNAN replies: Mr. Landaw is right. If we want to accommodate young Anne's transcendent dreams to temporal boundaries we should change that "ten years or so" to twenty, if indeed we need a precise number at all. I read through Mollie Gillam's short biography of Maud Montgomery to see if I could find the statement that the first *Anne* is set in the late nineteenth century, the time of Montgomery's own childhood. I couldn't locate it but that may be my fault. Somehow Anne of the first book does not seem to have the "feel" of late nineteenth century, but that may be because historical time does not often declare itself in the pastoral community surrounding Green Gables, hermetically isolated as it is from the harshness of the real world.

Montgomery seems to have been careful in writing her first Anne book not to leave historical time and place marks, a precaution that may have helped in avoiding anachronisms that, later pounded upon, would mark the pastoral quality of her Arcadian tale.

At one time I thought of hunting up early fashion magazines to get an actual time frame for young Anne's dreamed-of puffed sleeves, but an inner voice told me, "Enough, already!"

While Montgomery always denied any claim of identity between herself and her redheaded brainchild, there are a number of similar if not identical experiences shared by the two. One of these concerns the First Class Certificate in teaching obtained by both. Montgomery took hers at age twenty in July 1894. Her Anne got hers at age "sixteen and a half"—so she tells

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Marilla in the second to the last chapter of the Green Gables chronicle. Could we infer from this that the events described in Anne's adventures in the Green Gables years took place in the late nineteenth century? Perhaps Maud would reply, "If you must, but I'd rather leave the calendar date open to dream as well as arithmetic."

I Like a Gershwin Tune

Although I have read no biographies of the Gershwin brothers and have no special interest in them (I am a member of the A.R. [After Rock] generation), I was interested to learn from Aristides in "I Like a Gershwin Tune," which appeared in the Spring 1995 issue, of George's lack of modesty. This is because I recall a radio interview of a few years ago, when Ira died, in which a friend of Ira's (whose name I do not recall) reported as to Ira's high level of modesty.

He told of the time that he and Ira and their wives were planning to go out for dinner. Ira called the restaurant they'd chosen to request reservations, but had to report back to the others that it had no more available that evening. The friend telling the story said "Wait," and went into the next room to make a call. He returned and informed the others that he'd made reservations for four at that same restaurant. "How could they have reservations for you and not for me?" Ira asked. "It was easy," said the friend, "I just told them that I was Ira Gershwin."

HENRY COHEN
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Cleanth Brooks Remembered

I very much enjoyed reading James Gollin's "Cleanth Brooks Remembered" (Spring 1995) because the article captured Cleanth Brooks the man and literary critic. I did not know Brooks very well, and then only between 1988 and 1990, but he certainly was the man James Gollin described as generous, encouraging, purposeful, and a lover of good talk.

I met Cleanth Brooks where many others must have, too—at a conference on modern literature. I was to give a paper on ideology and art in *The Waste Land* at the T. S. Eliot centennial conference at the University of Maine in August 1988, and Ronald Bush of Cal Tech was the featured speaker of our group of three presenters. (Still a graduate student at the time, I was nervous about sharing the podium with Bush, a fine modern scholar and author of very good books on Eliot and Ezra Pound.) After Bush had spoken from his notes, I followed in front of an audience of about seventy-five unknown scholars. When I had finished, the talks completed, an older scholar approached and told me how much he had enjoyed my reappraisal of Eliot's social and political views in light of recent attacks on Eliot by the academic Left. This older scholar, of course, was Cleanth Brooks, and I was more than a little surprised that he would take the time to talk to me, let alone credit my work so generously.

I later sent Brooks a paper I had delivered elsewhere on Hemingway's modernism, and again I received back generous praise. Brooks also wrote a letter of recommendation for me, and after reading it, a university search committee would think it was about to interview the next emerging Modernist critic. I wondered how many student lives Brooks had impacted over an academic career that spanned seven decades. I was gaining a new perspective on this man, viewing him from the inside as it were.

Beyond his significance as a literary critic, though this was a real part of it, it seems to me that Cleanth Brooks was intent upon "meaning a life." His actions spoke in conjunction with his words whether he was dealing with a poet like T. S. Eliot or a graduate student like James Gollin, Patricia Sheppard, or me. He was equally interested in all of us, and in our journey through this mystery called "living." He could best "mean a life," find a purpose in the seemingly purposeless, by extending an honest, helping hand. As he himself had written, he acted like a man who had "realize[d] himself as a man." He "act[ed] like a responsible moral being." He had not allowed himself "to drift like a mere thing." He had lived a life well-wrought.

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Professor James Gollin is to be commended for his remembrance of Cleanth Brooks in the Spring 1995 SCHOLAR. I write to add something of a postscript to Mr. Gollin's fine essay.

The Institute of United States Studies of the University of London was host to Cleanth Brooks for his visit to England mentioned by Mr. Gollin, and I thought your readers might enjoy an account of his time here. As one would expect, Cleanth threw himself into his visit with great enthusiasm, delivering a captivating public

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lecture, "The American Dream," and teaching a graduate American Literature seminar on Saul Bellow's *Augie March.* But my reason for writing goes beyond Cleanth's public presentations.

When Cleanth accepted our invitation to visit, we had every reason to think most of his time would be taken up by old friends in England. "No," he told me, "I am an old man; they are all dead." As a result, I had an opportunity to spend nearly every day of the week with him, and it was one of the most educational experiences I could imagine. Not only did we have leisurely lunches during which Cleanth shared with me many of the vast store of tales of his early years at Vanderbilt and LSU, his time in London as Cultural Attaché, and his sense of loss as to what had become of the serious study of literature in so many American universities, but Cleanth proved to be the most engaging of tour guides. He taught me about the Elgin Marbles as we toured the British Museum; he spoke of the literary power of the Book of Common Prayer when we attended services at St. Luke's in Chelsea (where, he reminded me, Dickens had married); and late on Sunday afternoon, on a bench near Poets' Corner in Westminster Abby, he shared with me the memories of his enduring friendship and collaboration with Robert Penn Warren. Throughout the week he repeatedly apologized for talking too much; I told him that would be impossible.

Cleanth's last visit to London was all too brief and was undertaken (with his doctor's blessing) with his knowledge that there was something wrong that would have to be treated upon his return. It was, perhaps, fitting that Cleanth's last public lectures occurred at the Institute of United States Studies. Not only was he a member of our American Advisory Board at the time of his death, but the Institute had been founded under his watchful eye back in 1965 when he was Cultural Attaché. American studies in Britain have had few friends as good as Cleanth Brooks and none better.

The Institute has established an annual lecture to remember him; we hope to inaugurate the Cleanth Brooks Lecture in American Literature during the 1995–96 academic year. It seems to us a most fitting memorial to a great man who was still teaching to the end of his splendid life.

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